Inskip, John Swanel, ed.

HOLINESS MISCELLANY.

ESSAYS

DR. ADAM CLARKE AND RICHARD WATSON.

EXPERIENCES

OF

BISHOP FOSTER,

REV. GEO. PECK, D.D., REV. ALFRED COOKMAN,
REV. J. A. WOOD, REV. E. M. LEVY, D.D.
D. STEELE, D.D

National Publishing Association for the Promotion of Holiness,
921 ARCH ST., PHILADELPHIA.
J. S. INSKIP, AGENT.
1882.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THE doctrinal statement of "ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION" included in the following pages, will be found highly satisfactory to all classes of readers. The plain "matter-of-fact" style of Dr. Adam Clarke is such as will be appreciated by all, and the argument of RICHARD WATSON is as clear and conclusive as language can make it. With these two treatises we feel it is perfectly safe to submit the question to the candid judgment of the reader.

The illustrations of this wondrous grace furnished by the several experiences narrated, will serve to place the precious truth before the mind in a still clearer and more attractive light. These experiences, it must be remembered, were written by the men who enjoyed them. This will explain why each is somewhat peculiar. The persons are well known. What they have written is entitled to consideration, and will have great weight with all candid, honest minds. We would make no invidious comparisons between them.

Digitized by Google

All of them are exceedingly precious, and will be pondered with grateful joy by those interested in the subject of full salvation.

It will be noticed that these wonderful revelations of the grace and power of God, were made in response to earnest and believing prayer. The peculiar type of blessing each obtained was in a great measure the result of the mental make up of each individual. We commend each of the testimonies to all honest inquirers after the "more excellent way," as giving a better idea of what entire sanctification is, and how it may be obtained than can be found in the best theological treatises upon the subject that ever were written. Believing we thus may help many travelers in Zion's happy way, we send out our little volume, bearing the suggestive title of "Holiness Miscellany," devoutly praying it may prove an evangel of love and salvation to thousands.

JOHN S. INSKIP.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

Entire Sanctification, A. CLARKE, D. D., LL. D. 7

Perfected Holiness of Believers, Richard Watson. 61

Experience of Rev. G. Peck, D. D..... 79

Experience of Rev. A. Cookman..... 90

Experience of Rev. J. A. Wood..... 99

Experience of Bishop Foster..... 124

Experience of Rev. E. M. Levy, D. D..... 136

Experience of D. Steele, D. D..... 165

Digitized by Google

Entire Sanctification.

BY DR. ADAM CLARKE.

The word "sanctify" has two meanings. 1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote or dedicate to God and his service. 2. It signifies to make holy or pure.

Many talk much, and indeed well, of what Christ has done for us: but how little is spoken of what he is to do in us! and yet all that he has done for us is in reference to what he is to do in us. He was incarnated, suffered, died, and rose again from the dead; ascended to heaven, and there appears in the presence of God for us. These were all saving, atoning, and mediating acts for us; that he might reconcile us to God; that he might blot out our sin; that he might purge our consciences from dead works; that he might bind the strong man

Digitized by Google

armed—take away the armor in which he trusted, wash the polluted heart, destroy every foul and abominable desire, all tormenting and unholy tempers; that he might make the heart his throne, fill the soul with his light, power, and life; and, in a word, "destroy the works of the devil." These are done in us; without which we cannot be saved unto eternal life. But these acts done in us are consequent on the acts done for us: for had he not been incarnated, suffered, and died in our stead, we could not receive either pardon or holiness; and did he not cleanse and purify our hearts, we could not enter into the place where all is purity: for the beatific vision is given to them only who are purified from all unrighteousness: for it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Nothing is purified by death;—nothing in the grave; nothing in heaven. The living stones of the temple, like those of that at Jerusalem, are hewn, squared, and cut here, in the church militant, to prepare them to enter into the composition of the church triumphant.

This perfection is the restoration of man to the state of holiness from which he fell, by

Digitized by Google

creating him anew in Christ Jesus, and restoring to him that image and likeness of God which he has lost. A higher meaning than this it cannot have; a lower meaning it must not have. God made man in that degree of perfection which was pleasing to his own infinite wisdom and goodness. Sin defaced this divine image; Jesus came to restore it. Sin must have no triumph; and the Redeemer of mankind must have his glory. But if man be not perfectly saved from all sin, sin does triumph, and Satan exult, because they have done a mischief that Christ either cannot or will not remove. To say he cannot, would be shocking blasphemy against the infinite power and dignity of the great Creator; to say he will not, would be equally such against the infinite benevolence and holiness of his nature. All sin, whether in power, guilt, or defilement, is the work of the devil; and he, Jesus, came to destroy the work of the devil; and as all unrighteousness is sin, so his blood cleanseth from all sin, because it cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

Many stagger at the term *perfection* in Christianity; because they think that what is implied in it is inconsistent with a state of probation,

Digitized by Google

and savors of pride and presumption: but we must take good heed how we stagger at any word of God; and much more how we deny or fritter away the meaning of any of his sayings, lest he reprove us, and we be found liars before him. But it may be that the term is rejected because it is not understood. Let us examine its import.

The word "perfection," in reference to any person or thing signifies that such person or thing is complete or finished; that it has nothing redundant, and is in nothing defective. And hence that observation of a learned civilian is at once both correct and illustrative, namely, "We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted." And *to be perfect* often signifies "to be blameless, clear, irreproachable;" and according to the above definition of Hooker, a man may be said to be perfect who answers the end for which God made him; and as God requires every man to love him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself; then he is a perfect man that does so; he answers the end for which God made him; and this is more evident from the nature of that love which fills his heart: for as love is the

Digitized by Google

principle of obedience, so he that loves his God with all his powers, will obey him with all his powers; and he who loves his neighbor as himself will not only do no injury to him, but, on the contrary, labor to promote his best interests. Why the doctrine which enjoins such a state of perfection as this, should be dreaded, ridiculed, or despised, is a most strange thing; and the opposition to it can only be from that carnal mind that is enmity to God; "That is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And had I no other proof that man is fallen from God, his opposition to Christian holiness would be to me sufficient.

The whole design of God was to restore man to his image, and raise him from the ruins of his fall; in a word, to make him perfect; to blot out all his sins, purify his soul, and fill him with holiness; so that no unholy temper, evil desire, or impure affection or passion shall either lodge or have any being within him; this and this only is true religion, or Christian perfection; and a less salvation than this would be dishonorable to the sacrifice of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost; and would be as unworthy of the appellation of Christianity," as

Digitized by Google

it would be of that of "holiness or perfection." They who ridicule this are scoffers at the word of God; many of them totally irreligious men, sitting in the seat of the scornful. They who deny it, deny the whole scope and design of divine revelation and the mission of Jesus Christ. And they who preach the opposite doctrine are either speculative Antinomians, or pleaders for Baal.

When St. Paul says he "warns every man, and teaches every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man PERFECT in Christ Jesus," he must mean something. What then is this *something?* It must mean "that holiness without which none shall see the Lord." Call it by what name we please, it must imply the pardon of all transgression, and the removal of the whole body of sin and death; for this must take place before we can be like him, and see him as he is, in the effulgence of his own glory. This fitness, then, to appear before God, and thorough preparation for eternal glory, is what I plead for, pray for, and heartily recommend to all true believers, under the name of *Christian perfection.* Had I a better name, one more energetic, one with a greater pleni-

Digitized by Google

tude of meaning, one more worthy of the efficacy of the blood that bought our peace, and cleanseth from all unrighteousness, I would gladly adopt and use it. Even the word "perfection" has, in some relations, so many qualifications and abatements that cannot comport with that full and glorious salvation recommended in the gospel, and bought and sealed by the blood of the cross, that I would gladly lay it by, and employ a word more positive and unequivocal in its meaning, and more worthy of the merit of the infinite atonement of Christ, and of the energy of his almighty Spirit; but there is none in our language; which I deplore as an inconvenience and a loss.

Why then are there so many, even among sincere and godly ministers and people, who are so much opposed to the term, and so much alarmed at the profession? I answer, Because they think no man can be fully saved from sin in this life. I ask, where is this, in unequivocal words, written in the New Testament? Where, in that book is it intimated that sin is not wholly destroyed till death takes place, and the soul and the body are separated? Nowhere. In the popish baseless doctrine of purgatory,

Digitized by Google

this doctrine, not with more rational consequences, is held: this doctrine allows that, so inveterate is sin, it cannot be wholly destroyed even in death; and that a penal fire, in a middle state between heaven and hell, is necessary to atone for that which the blood of Christ had not cancelled; and to purge from that which the energy of the almighty Spirit had not cleansed before death.

Even papists could not see that a moral evil was detained in the soul through its physical connection with the body; and that it required the dissolution of this physical connection before the moral contagion could be removed. Protestants, who profess, and most certainly possess, a better faith, are they alone that maintain the deathbed purgatory; and how positively do they hold out death as the complete deliverer from all corruption, and the final destroyer of sin, as if it were revealed in every page of the Bible! Whereas, there is not one passage in the sacred volume that says any such thing. Were this true, then death, far from being the last enemy, would be the last and best friend, and the greatest of all deliverers: for if the last remains of all the indwelling sin of all

Digitized by Google

believers is to be destroyed by death, (and a fearful mass this will make,) then death, that removes it, must be the highest benefactor of mankind. The truth is, he is neither the cause nor the means of its destruction. It is the blood of Jesus alone that cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

It is supposed that indwelling sin is useful even to true believers, because it humbles them and keeps them low in their own estimation. A little examination will show that this is contrary to the fact. It is generally, if not universally allowed, that pride is of the essence of sin, if not its very essence; and the root whence all moral obliquity flows. How then can pride humble us? Is not this absurd? Where is there a sincere Christian, be his creed what it may, that does not deplore his proud, rebellious, and unsubdued heart and will, as the cause of all his wretchedness; the thing that mars his best sacrifices, and prevents his communion with God? How often do such people say or sing, both in their public and private devotions,—

"But pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform!"

Digitized by Google

Were there no pride, there would be no sin; and the heart from which it is cast out has the humility, meekness, and gentleness of Christ implanted in its stead.

But still it is alleged, as an indubitable fact, that "a man is humbled under a sense of indwelling sin." I grant that they who see and feel, and deplore their indwelling sin, are humbled: but is it the sin that humbles? No. It is the grace of God, that shows and condemns the sin that humbles us. Neither the devil nor his work will ever show themselves. Pride works frequently under a dense mask, and will often assume the garb of humility. How true is that saying, and of how many is it the language!

> "Proud I am my wants to see,
> Proud of my humility."

And to conceal his working, even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light! It appears then that we attribute this boasted humiliation to a wrong cause. We never are humbled under a sense of indwelling sin till the Spirit of God drags it to the light, and shows us, not only its horrid deformity, but its hostility to God; and he manifests it, that he may take it away: but a false opinion causes men

Digitized by Google

to hug the monster, and to contemplate their chains with complacency!

It has been objected to this perfection, this perfect work of God in the soul, that "the greater sense we have of our own sinfulness, the more will Christ be exalted in the eye of the soul: for, if the thing were possible that a man might be cleansed from all sin in this life, he would feel no need of a Saviour; Christ would be undervalued by him as no longer needing his saving power." This objection mistakes the whole state of the case. How is Christ exalted in the view of the soul? How is it that he becomes precious to us? Is it not from a sense of what he has done for us, and what he has done in us? Did any man ever love God till he had felt that God loved him? Do we not "love him because he first loved us?" Is it the name JESUS that is precious to us? or JESUS the Saviour saving us from our sins? Is all our confidence placed in him because of some one saving act? or, because of his continual operation as the Saviour? Can any effect subsist without its cause? Must not the cause continue to operate in order to maintain the effect? Do we value a good cause

Digitized by Google

more for the instantaneous production of a good and important effect, than we do for its continual energy, exerted to maintain that good and important effect? All these questions can be answered by a child. What is it that cleanseth the soul and destroys sin? Is it not the mighty power of the grace of God? What is it that keeps the soul clean? Is it not the same power dwelling in us? No more can an effect subsist without its cause, than a sanctified soul abide in holiness without the indwelling Sanctifier. When Christ casts out the strong-armed man, he takes away that armor in which he trusted, he spoils his goods, he cleanses and enters into the house, so that the heart becomes the habitation of God through the Spirit. Can then a man undervalue that Christ who not only blotted out his iniquity, but cleansed his soul from all sin; and whose presence and inward mighty working constitute all his holiness and all his happiness? Impossible! Jesus was never so highly valued, so intensely loved, so affectionately obeyed, as now. The great Saviour has not his highest glory from his atoning and redeeming acts, but from the manifestation of his saving power.

Digitized by Google

"But the persons who profess to have been made thus perfect are proud and supercilious, and their whole conduct says to their neighbor, 'Stand by, I am holier than thou.'" No person that acts so has ever received this grace. He is either a hypocrite or a self-deceiver. Those who have received it are full of meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering: they love God with all their hearts—they love even their enemies; love the whole human family, and are servants of all. They know they have nothing but what they have received. In the splendor of God's holiness they feel themselves absorbed. They have neither light, power, love, nor happiness, but from their indwelling Saviour. Their holiness, though it fills the soul, yet is only a drop from the infinite ocean. The flame of their love, though it penetrate their whole being, is only a spark from the incomprehensible Sun of righteousness. In a spirit and in a way which none but themselves can fully comprehend and feel, they can say or sing,—

"I loathe myself when God I see,
And into nothing fall:
Content that Christ exalted be;
And God is all in all."

Digitized by Google

It has been no small mercy to me, that, in the course of my religious life, I have met with many persons who professed that the blood of Christ had saved them from all sin, and whose profession was maintained by an immaculate life; but I never knew one of them that was not of the spirit above described. They were men of the strongest faith, the purest love, the holiest affections, the most obedient lives, and the most useful in society. I have seen such walking with God for many years: and as I had the privilege of observing their walk in life, so have I been privileged with their testimony at death, when their sun appeared to grow broader and brighter at its setting; and, though they came through great tribulation, they found that their robes were washed and made white through the blood of the Lamb. They fully witnessed the grand effects which in this life flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification; namely, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance in the same to the end of their lives. O God! let my death be like that of these righteous! and let my end be like theirs! Amen.

Digitized by Google

It is scarcely worth mentioning another objection that has been started by the ignorant, the worthless, and the wicked. "The people that profess this, leave Christ out of the question; they either think that they have purified their own hearts, or that they have gained their pretended perfection by their own merits." Nothing can be more false than this calumny. I know *that people* well in whose creed the doctrine of "salvation from all sin" in this life" is a prominent article. But that people hold most conscientiously that all our salvation, from the first dawn of light in the soul to its entry into the kingdom of glory, is all by and through Christ. He alone convinces the soul of sin, justifies the ungodly, sanctifies the unholy, preserves in this state of salvation, and brings to everlasting blessedness. No soul ever was or can be saved but through his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and continued intercession at the right hand of God.

If men would but spend as much time in fervently calling upon God to cleanse by the blood that which He has not cleansed, as

Digitized by Google

they spend in decrying this doctrine, what a glorious state of the church should we soon witness! Instead of compounding with iniquity, and tormenting their minds to find out with how little grace they may be saved, they would renounce the devil and all his works, and be determined never to rest till they had found that He had bruised him under their feet, and that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all unrighteousness. Why is it that men will not try how far God will save them? nor leave off praying and believing for more and more, till they find that God has held his hand? When they find that their agonizing faith and prayer receive no farther answer, then, and not till then, they may conclude that God will be no farther gracious, and that He will not save to the uttermost them who come to him through Christ Jesus.

But it is farther objected, that even St. Paul himself denies this doctrine of perfection, disclaiming it in reference to himself: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after," Phil. iii. 12. This place is mistaken: the apostle is not speaking of his restoration to the image of God; but

Digitized by Google

to completing his ministerial course, and receiving the crown of martyrdom; as I have fully shown on my notes on this place, and to which I must beg to refer the reader. There is another point that has been produced, at least indirectly, in the form of an objection to this doctrine: "Where are those adult, those perfect Christians? We know none such; but we have heard that some persons professing those extraordinary degrees of holiness have become scandalous in their lives." When a question of this kind is asked by one who fears God, and earnestly desires his salvation, and only wishes to have full evidence that the thing is attainable, that he may shake himself from the dust, and arise and go out, and possess the good land—it deserves to be seriously answered. To such I would say, There may be several, even in the circle of your own religious acquaintance, whose evil tempers and unholy affections God has destroyed; and having filled them with His own holiness, they are enabled to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. But such make no public professions: their conduct, their spirit, the whole tenor of their life, is

Digitized by Google

their testimony. Again: there may be none such among your religious acquaintance, because they do not know their privilege, or they unfortunately sit under a ministry where the doctrine is decried; and in such congregations and churches holiness never abounds; men are too apt to be slothful, and unfaithful to the grace they have received; they need not their minister's exhortations to beware of looking for or expecting a heart purified from all unrighteousness; striving or agonizing to "enter in at the strait gate" is not pleasant work to flesh and blood; and they are glad to have anything to countenance their spiritual indolence; and such ministers have always a powerful coadjutor; the father of lies, and the spirit of error will work in the unrenewed heart, filling it with darkness, and prejudice, and unbelief. No wonder, then, that in such places, and under such a ministry, there is no man that can be "presented perfect in Christ Jesus." But wherever the trumpet gives a certain sound, and the people go forth to battle, headed by the Captain of their salvation, there the foe is routed, and the genuine believers brought into the liberty of the children of God.

Digitized by Google

As to some having professed to have received this salvation, and afterward become scandalous in their lives (though in all my long ministerial labors, and extensive religious acquaintance, I never found but one example), I would just observe that they might possibly have been deceived; thought they had what they had not; or they might have become unfaithful to that grace and lost it; and this is possible through the whole range of a state of probation. There have been angels who kept not their first estate; and we all know, to our cost, that he who was the head and fountain of the whole human family, who was made in the image and likeness of God, sinned against God, and fell from that state. And so may any of his descendants fall from any degree of the grace of God while in their state of probation; and any man and every man must fall, whenever he or they cease to watch unto prayer, and cease to be "workers together with God." Faith must ever be kept in lively exercise, working by love; and that love is only safe when found exerting its energies in the path of obedience. An objection of this kind against the doctrine of Christian perfection will apply as forcibly against the

Digitized by Google

whole revelation of God as it can do against one of the doctrines; because that revelation brings the account of the defection of angels and of the fall of man. The truth is, no doctrine of God stands upon the knowledge, experience, faithfulness, or unfaithfulness of man; it stands on the veracity of God who gave it. If there were not a man to be found who was justified freely through the redemption that is by Jesus; yet the doctrine of "justification by faith" is true; for it is a doctrine that stands on the truth of God. And suppose not one could be found in all the churches of Christ whose heart was purified from all unrighteousness, and who loved God and man with all his regenerated powers, yet the doctrine of Christian perfection would still be true; for Christ was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil; and his blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness. And suppose every man be a liar, God is true.

It is not the profession of a doctrine that establishes its truth; it is the truth of God, from which it has proceeded. Man's experience may illustrate it; but it is God's truth that confirms it.

Digitized by Google

In all cases of this nature, we must forever cease from man, implicitly credit God's testimony, and look to Him in and through whom all the promises of God are yea and amen.

To be filled with God is a great thing; to be filled with *the fulness* of God is still greater; to be filled with *all the fulness* of God is greatest of all. This utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding, by leading at once to consider the immensity of God, the infinitude of His attributes, and the absolute perfection of each! But there must be a sense in which even this wonderful petition was understood by the apostle, and may be comprehended by us. Most people, in quoting these words, endeavor to correct or explain the apostle by adding the word *communicable*. But this is as idle as it is useless and impertinent. Reason surely tells us that St. Paul would not pray that they should be filled with what could not be communicated. The apostle certainly meant what he said, and would be understood in his own meaning; and we may soon see what this meaning is.

By the "fulness of God," we are to understand all the gifts and graces which he has

Digitized by Google

promised to bestow on man in order to his full salvation here, and his being fully prepared for the enjoyment of glory hereafter. To be filled with all the fulness of God is to have the heart emptied of and cleansed from all sin and defilement, and filled with humility, meekness, gentleness, goodness, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth, and love to God and man. And that this implies a thorough emptying of the soul of every thing that is not of God, and leads not to him, is evident from this, that what God fills, neither sin nor Satan can fill, nor in any wise occupy; for, if a vessel be filled with one fluid or substance, not a drop or particle of any other kind can enter it, without displacing the same quantum of the original matter as that which is afterward introduced. God cannot be said to fill the whole soul while any place, part, passion, or faculty is filled, or less or more occupied, by sin or Satan: and as neither sin nor Satan can be where God fills and occupies the whole, so the terms of the prayer state that Satan shall neither have any dominion over that soul nor being in it. A fulness of humility precludes all pride; of meekness, precludes anger; of gentleness, all ferocity; of goodness, all evil;

Digitized by Google

of justice, all injustice; of holiness, all sin; of mercy, all unkindness and revenge; of truth, all falsity and dissimulation; and where God is loved with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, there is no room for enmity or hatred to him, or to any thing connected with him; so, where a man loves his neighbor as himself, no ill shall be worked to that neighbor; but, on the contrary, every kind affection will exist toward him; and every kind action, so far as power and circumstances can permit, will be done to him. Thus the being filled with God's fulness will produce constant, pious, and affectionate obedience to him, and unvarying benevolence towards one's neighbor; that is, any man, any and every human being. Such a man is saved from all sin; the law is fulfilled in him; and he ever possesses and acts under the influence of that love to God and man which is the fulfilling of the law. It is impossible, with any Scriptural or rational consistency, to understand these words in any lower sense; but how much more they imply, (and more they do imply,) who can tell?

Many preachers, and multitudes of professing people, are studious to find out how many

Digitized by Google

imperfections and infidelities, and how much inward sinfulness, are consistent with a safe state in religion; but how few, very few, are bringing out the fair gospel standard to try the height of the members of the church; whether they be fit for the heavenly army; whether their stature be such as qualifies them for the ranks of the church militant! "the measure of the stature of the fulness" is seldom seen; the measure of the stature of littleness, dwarfishness, and emptiness, is often exhibited.

Some say "The body of sin in believers is, indeed, an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction." So, then, the death of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit were only sufficient to depose and enfeeble the tyrant sin; but our death must come in to effect his total destruction! Thus our death is, at least partially, our Saviour, and thus that which was an effect of sin, ("for sin entered into the world, and death by sin,") becomes the means of finally destroying it: that is, the effect of a cause can become so powerful as to re-act upon that cause and produce its annihilation! The divinity and philosophy of this sentiment are equally ab-

Digitized by Google

surd. It is the blood of Christ alone that cleanses from all unrighteousness; and the sanctification of a believer is no more dependant on death than his justification. If it be said that "believers do not cease from sin till they die," I have only to say they are such believers as do not make a proper use of their faith: and what can be said more of the whole herd of transgressors and infidels? They cease to sin when they cease to breathe. If the Christian religion bring no other privileges than this to its upright followers, well may we ask, "Wherein doth the wise man differ from the fool, for they have both one end!" But the whole gospel teaches a contrary doctrine.

It is strange there should be found a person believing the whole gospel system and yet living in sin! "Salvation from sin" is the long continued sound, as it is the spirit and design, of the gospel. Our Christian name, our baptismal covenant, our profession of faith in Christ, and avowed belief in his word, all call us to this: can it be said that we have any louder calls than they? Our self-interest, as it respects the happiness of a godly life, and the glories of eternal blessedness; the pains and

Digitized by Google

wretchedness of a life of sin, leading to the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched; second, most powerfully, the above calls. Reader, lay these things to heart, and answer this question to God: "How shall I escape if I neglect so great salvation?" And then, as thy conscience shall answer, let thy mind and thy hand begin to act.

As there is no end to the merits of Christ incarnated and crucified; no bounds to the mercy and love of God; no let or hinderance to the almighty energy and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; no limits to the improvability of the human soul; so there can be no bounds to the saving influence which God will dispense to the heart of every genuine believer. We may ask and receive, and our joy shall be full! Well may we bless and praise God, "who has called us into such a state of salvation;" a state in which we may be thus saved; and, by the grace of that state, continue in the same to the end of our lives!

As sin is the cause of the ruin of mankind, the gospel system, which exhibits its cure, is fitly called "good news, or glad tidings;" and it is good news, because it proclaims Him who

Digitized by Google

saves his people from their sins; and it would indeed be dishonorable to that grace, and the infinite merit of Him who procured it, to suppose, much more to assert, that sin had made wounds which grace would not heal. Of such a triumph Satan shall ever be deprived.

"He that committeth sin is of the devil." Hear this, ye who plead for Baal, and cannot bear the thought of that doctrine that states believers are to be saved from all sin in this life! He who committeth sin is a child of the devil, and shows that he has still the nature of the devil in him; "for the devil sinneth from the beginning:" he was the father of sin,—brought sin into the world, and maintains sin in the world by living in the hearts of his own children, and thus leading them to transgression; and persuading others that they cannot be saved from their sins in this life, that he may secure a continual residence in their heart. He also knows that if he has a place throughout life, he will probably have it at death; and, if so, throughout eternity.

"That is," say some, "he does not sin habitually as he formerly did." This is bringing the influence and privileges of the heavenly birth

Digitized by Google

very low indeed. We have the most indubitable evidence that many of the heathen philosophers had acquired, by mental discipline and cultivation, an entire ascendancy over all their wonted vicious habits. Perhaps my reader will recollect the story of the physiognomist, who, coming into the place where Socrates was delivering a lecture, his pupils, wishing to put the principles of the man's science to proof, desired him to examine the face of their master, and say what his moral character was. After a full contemplation of the philosopher's visage, he pronounced him the "most gluttonous, drunken, brutal, and libidinous old man that he ever met." As the character of Socrates was the reverse of all this, his disciples began to insult the physiognomist. Socrates interfered, and said, "The principles of his science may be very correct; for such I was, but I have conquered it by my philosophy." O ye Christian divines! ye real or pretended gospel ministers! will ye allow the influence of the grace of Christ a sway not even so extensive as that of the philosophy of a heathen who never heard of the true God?

Many tell us that "no man can be saved

Digitized by Google

from sin in this life." Will these persons permit us to ask, How much sin may we be saved from in this life? Something must be ascertained on this subject: 1. That the soul may have some determinate object in view. 2. That it may not lose its time, or employ its faith and energy, in praying for what is impossible to be attained. Now, as Christ was manifested to take away our sins, to destroy the works of the devil; and as his blood cleanseth from all sin and unrighteousness, is it not evident that God means that believers in Christ shall be saved from all sin? For if his blood cleanses from all sin, if he destroys the works of the devil, (and sin is the work of the devil,) and if he who is born of God does not commit sin, then he must be cleansed from all sin; and while he continues in that state, he lives without sinning against God, for the seed of God remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born, or begotten of God.

How strangely warped and blinded by prejudice and system must men be who, in the face of such evidence as this, will still dare to maintain that no man can be saved from his sin in this life; but must daily commit sin in

Digitized by Google

thought, word, and deed, as the Westminster divines have asserted! that is, every man is laid under the fatal necessity of sinning as many ways against God as the devil does through his natural wickedness and malice; for even the devil himself can have no other way of sinning against God, except by thought, word, and deed. And yet, according to these and others of the same creed, "even the most regenerate sin against God as long as they live." It is a miserable salvo to say "they do not sin so much as they used to do; and they do not sin habitually, only occasionally." Alas for this system! Could not the grace that saved them partially save them perfectly? Could not that power of God that saved them from habitual sin save them from occasional or accidental sin? Shall we suppose that sin, how potent soever it may be, is as potent as the Spirit and grace of Christ? And may we not ask, If it was for God's glory and their good that they were partially saved, would it not have been more for God's glory and their good if they had been perfectly saved? But the letter and spirit of God's word, and the design and end of Christ's coming, is to save his people from their sins.

Digitized by Google

The perfection of the gospel system is not that it makes allowances for sin, but that it makes an atonement for it; not that it tolerates sin, but that it destroys it.

However inveterate the disease of sin may be, the grace of the Lord Jesus can fully cure it.

God sets no bounds to the communications of his grace and Spirit to them that are faithful. And as there are no bounds to the graces, so there should be none to the exercise of those graces. No man can ever feel that he loves God too much, or that he loves man too much for God's sake.

Be so purified and refined in your souls, by the indwelling Spirit, that even the light of God shining into your hearts shall not be able to discover a fault that the love of God has not purged away.

"Be thou perfect, and thou shalt be perfection," that is, altogether perfect: be just such as the holy God would have thee to be, as the Almighty God can make thee, and live as the all-sufficient God shall support thee; for He alone who makes the soul holy can preserve it in holiness. Our blessed Lord appears to have

Digitized by Google

these words pointedly in view, "Ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48. But what does this imply? Why, to be saved from all the power, the guilt, and the contamination of sin. This is only the negative part of salvation, but it has also a positive part; to be made perfect—to be perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect, to be filled with the fulness of God, to have Christ dwelling continually in the heart by faith, and to be rooted and grounded in love. This is the state in which man was created; for he was made in the image and likeness of God. This is the state from which man fell; for he broke the command of God. And this is the state into which every human soul must be raised who would dwell with God in glory; for Christ was incarnated and died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. What a glorious privilege! And who can doubt the possibility of its attainment who believes in the omnipotent love of God, the infinite merit of the blood of the atonement, and the all-pervading and all-purifying energy of the Holy Ghost? How many miserable souls employ that time to dispute and cavil against

Digitized by Google

the possibility of being saved from their sins, which they should devote to praying and believing that they might be saved out of the hands of their enemies! But some may say, "You overstrain the meaning of the term; it signifies only, Be sincere; for, as perfect obedience is impossible, God accepts of sincere obedience." If by *sincerity* the objection means "good desires, and generally good purposes, with an impure heart and spotted life," then I assert that no such thing is implied in the text, nor in the original word. But if the word *sincerity* be taken in its proper and literal sense, I have no objection to it. Sincere is compounded of *sine cera*, "without wax;" and, applied to moral subjects, is a metaphor taken from clarified honey, from which every atom of the comb or wax is separated. Then let it be proclaimed from heaven, "Walk before me, and be sincere! Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump unto God; and thus ye shall be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." This is sincerity. Reader, remember that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Ten thousand quibbles on insulated texts can never lessen, much less destroy,

Digitized by Google

the merit and efficacy of the great atonement.

God never gives a precept but he offers sufficient grace to enable thee to perform it. Believe as he would have thee, and act as he shall strengthen thee, and thou wilt believe all things savingly, and do all things well.

God is holy; and this is the eternal reason why all his people should be holy—should be purified from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. No faith in any particular creed, no religious observance, no acts of benevolence and charity, no mortification, attrition, or contrition can be a substitute for this. We must be made partakers of the divine nature. We must be saved from our sins—from the corruption that is in the world, and be holy within and righteous without, or never see God. For this very purpose Jesus Christ lived, died, and revived, that he might purify us unto himself; that through faith in his blood our sins might be blotted out, and our souls restored to the image of God. Reader, art thou hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Then, blessed art thou, for thou shalt be filled.

Digitized by Google

God is ever ready, by the power of his Spirit, to carry us forward to every degree of life, light, and love, necessary to prepare us for an eternal weight of glory. There can be little difficulty in attaining the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls from all sin, if God carry us forward to it; and this he will do, if we submit to be saved in his own way, and on his own terms. Many make a violent outcry against the doctrine of perfection; that is, against the heart being cleansed from all sin in this life, and filled with love to God and man; because they judge it to be impossible! Is it too much to say of these, that they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God? Surely, the Scripture promises the thing, and the power of God can carry us on to the possession of it.

The object of all God's promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to the image of God, which he had lost. This, indeed, is the sum and substance of the religion of Christ. We have partaken of an earthly, sensual, and devilish nature; the design of God, by Christ, is to remove this, and to make us partakers of the divine nature, and save us

Digitized by Google

from all the corruption, in principle and fact, which is in the world.

It is said that Enoch not only "walked with God," setting him always before his eyes—beginning, continuing, and ending every work to His glory—but also that "he pleased God," and had "the testimony that he did please God." Hence we learn that it was then possible to live so as not to offend God: consequently, so as not to commit sin against him, and to have the continual evidence or testimony that all that a man did and purposed was pleasing in the sight of Him who searches the heart, and by whom devices are weighed: and if it was possible then, it is surely, through the same grace, possible now; for God, and Christ, and faith are still the same.

The petition, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," certainly points out a deliverance from all sin; for nothing that is unholy can consist with the divine will; and, if this be fulfilled in man, surely sin shall be banished from his soul. Again: the holy angels never mingle iniquity with their loving obedience; and, as our Lord teaches us to pray that we do his will here as they do in heaven, can it be

Digitized by Google

thought he would put a petition into our mouths the fulfilment of which was impossible?

The reader is probably amazed at the paucity of large stars in the whole firmament of heaven. Will he permit me to carry his mind a little farther, and either stand astonished at, or deplore with me the fact that, out of the millions of Christians in the vicinity and splendor of the eternal Sun of Righteousness, how very few are found of the first order! How very few can stand examination by the test laid down in 1 Cor. xiii! How very few love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbors as themselves! How few mature Christians are found in the church! How few are, in all things, living for eternity! How little light, how little heat, and how little influence and activity, are to be found among them that bear the name of Christ! How few stars of the first magnitude will the Son of God have to deck the crown of His glory! Few are striving to excel in righteousness; and it seems to be a principal concern with many, to find out how little grace they may have, and yet escape hell; how little conformity to the will of God they may have, and yet get to heaven. In the

Digitized by Google

fear of God I register this testimony, that I have perceived it to be the labor of many to lower the standard of Christianity, and to soften down, or explain away, those promises of God that Himself has linked with duties; and, because they know they cannot be saved by their good works, they are contented to have no good works at all; and thus the necessity of Christian obedience, and Christian holiness, makes no prominent part of some modern creeds. Let all those who retain the apostolic doctrine, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin in this life, press every believer to go on to perfection, and expect to be saved, while here below, into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Jesus. To all such my soul says, Labor to show yourselves approved unto God; workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; and may the pleasure of the Lord prosper in your hands! Amen.

Many employ that time in brooding and mourning over their impure hearts, which should be spent in prayer and faith before God, that their impurities might be washed away. In what a state of nonage are many members of the Christian church!

Digitized by Google

I am afraid that what some persons call their *infirmities* may rather be called their *strengths;* the prevailing and frequently ruling power of pride, anger, ill will, &c.; for how few think evil tempers to be sins! The gentle term "infirmity" softens down the iniquity; and as St. Paul, so great and so holy a man, say they, had his infirmities, how can they expect to be without theirs? These should know that they are in a dangerous error; that St. Paul means nothing of the kind; for he speaks of his sufferings, and of these alone. One word more: would not the grace and power of Christ appear more conspicuous in slaying the lion than in keeping him chained? in destroying sin, root and branch, and filling the soul with his own holiness, with love to God and man, with the mind, all the holy, heavenly tempers that were in himself, than in leaving these impure and unholy tempers ever to live, and often to reign, in the heart? The doctrine is discreditable to the gospel, and wholly antichristian.

"If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not," 1 Kings viii. 46. On this verse we may observe that the second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition in

Digitized by Google

the first clause entirely nugatory; for if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, "If they sin;" but this contradiction is taken away by reference to the original, which should be translated, "If they shall sin against thee;" or, "Should they sin against thee; for there is no man that may not sin;" that is, There is no man impeccable; none infallible; none that is not liable to transgress. This is the true meaning of the phrase in various parts of the Bible, and so our translators have understood the original; for, even in the thirty-first verse of this chapter, they have translated *yecheta*, "If a man trespass;" which certainly implies he might or might not do it; and in this way they have translated the same word, "If a soul sin," in Lev. v. 1; vi. 2; 1 Sam. ii. 25; 2 Chron. vi. 22; and in several other places. The truth is, the Hebrew has no mood to express words in the permissive or optative way; but to express this sense, it uses the future tense of the conjugation *kal*. This text has been a wonderful stronghold for all who believe that there is no redemption from sin in this life; that no man can live without committing sin; and that we cannot be entirely freed from it till we die.

Digitized by Google

1. The text speaks no such doctrine; it only speaks of the possibility of every man sinning; and this must be true of a state of probation. 2. There is not another text in the divine records that is more to the purpose than this. 3. The doctrine is flatly in opposition to the design of the gospel; for Jesus came to save his people from their sin, and to destroy the works of the devil. 4. It is a dangerous and destructive doctrine, and should be blotted out of every Christian's creed. There are too many who are seeking to excuse their crimes by all means in their power; and we need not imbody their excuses in a creed, to complete their deception, by stating that their sins are unavoidable.

The soul was made for God, and can never be united to him, nor be happy, till saved from sin. He who is saved from his sin, and united to God, possesses the utmost felicity that the human soul can enjoy, either in this or the coming world.

Where a soul is saved from all sin, it is capable of being fully employed in the work of the Lord: it is then, and not till then, fully fitted for the Master's use.

All who are taught of Christ are not only

Digitized by Google

saved, but their understandings are much improved. True religion, civilization, mental improvement, common sense, and orderly behavior, go hand in hand.

When the light of Christ dwells fully in the heart, it extends its influence to every thought, word, and action; and directs its possessor how he is to act in all places and circumstances.

Our souls can never be truly happy till our wills be entirely subjected to, and become one with, the will of God.

While there is an empty, longing heart, there is a continual overflowing fountain of salvation. If we find, in any place, or at any time, that the oil ceases to flow, it is because there are no empty vessels there; no souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We find fault with the dispensations of God's mercy, and ask, "Why were the former days better than these?" Were we as much in earnest for our salvation as our forefathers were for theirs, we should have equal supplies, and as much reason to sing aloud of divine mercy.

"Be ye holy," saith the Lord, "for I am holy." He who can give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness is one who loves

Digitized by Google

holiness; who hates sin; who longs to be saved from it, and takes encouragement at the recollection of God's holiness, as he seeth in this the holy nature which he is to share; and the perfection which he is here to attain. But most who call themselves Christians hate the doctrine of holiness, never hear it inculcated without pain; and the principal part of their studies and those of their pastors, is to find out with how little holiness they can rationally expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven. O fatal and soul-destroying delusion! How long will a holy God suffer such abominable doctrines to pollute his church, and destroy the souls of men.

Increase in the image and favor of God. Every grace and divine influence which ye have received is a seed, a heavenly seed, which, if it be watered with the dew of heaven from above, will endlessly increase and multiply itself. He who continues to believe, love, and obey, will grow in grace, and continually increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as his Sacrifice, Sanctifier, Counsellor, Preserver, and final Saviour. The life of a Christian is a growth: he is at first born of God, and is a lit-

Digitized by Google

tle child: becomes a young man and a father in Christ. Every father was once an infant; and had he not grown, he would never have been a man. Those who content themselves with the grace they received when converted to God, are, at best, in a continual state of infancy; but we find, in the order of nature, that the infant that does not grow, and grow daily too, is sickly, and soon dies: so, in the order of grace, those who do not grow up into Jesus Christ are sickly and will soon die—die to all sense and influence of heavenly things. There are many who boast of the grace of their conversion; persons who were never more than babes, and have long since lost even that grace, because they did not grow in it. Let him that readeth understand.

In order to get a clean heart, a man must know and feel its depravity, acknowledge and deplore it before God, in order to be fully sanctified. Few are pardoned, because they do not feel and confess their sins; and few are sanctified and cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own sore and the plague of their hearts. As the blood of Jesus Christ, the merit of his passion and death, ap-

Digitized by Google

plied by faith, purges the conscience from all dead works, so the same cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness. As all unrighteousness is sin, so he that is cleansed from all unrighteousness is cleansed from all sin. To attempt to evade this, and plead for the continuance of sin in the heart through life, is ungrateful, wicked, and blasphemous; for, as he who says he has not sinned, makes God a liar, who has declared the contrary through every part of His revelation, so he that says the blood of Christ either cannot or will not cleanse us from all sin in this life, gives also the lie to his Maker, who has declared the contrary, and thus shows that the word, the doctrine of God, is not in him. Reader, it is the birthright of every child of God to be cleansed from all sin, to keep himself unspotted from the world, and so to live as never more to offend his Maker. All things are possible to him that believeth, because all things are possible to the infinitely meritorious blood and energetic Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Every man whose heart is full of the love of God, is full of humility; for there is no man so humble as he whose heart is cleansed from

Digitized by Google

all sin. It has been said that indwelling sin humbles us; never was there a greater falsity: pride is the very essence of sin; he who has sin has pride; and pride, too, in proportion to his sin: this is a mere popish doctrine; and, strange to tell, the doctrine on which their doctrine of merit is founded! They say, God leaves concupiscence in the heart of every Christian, that, in striving with and overcoming it from time to time, he may have an accumulation of meritorious acts. Certain Protestants say, "It is a true sign of a very gracious state when a man feels and deplores his inbred corruption." How near do these come to the Papists, whose doctrine they profess to detest and abhor! The truth is, it is no sign of grace whatever; it only argues, as they use it, that the man has got light to show him his corruptions, but he has not yet got grace to destroy them. He is convinced that he should have the mind of Christ, but he feels that he has the mind of Satan; he deplores it; and, if his bad doctrine do not prevent him, he will not rest till he feels the blood of Christ cleansing him from all sin.

Can any man expect to be saved from his

Digitized by Google

inward sin in the other world? None, except such as hold the popish, antiscriptural doctrine of purgatory. "But this deliverance is expected at death." Where is the promise that it shall then be given? There is not one such in the whole Bible! And to believe for a thing essential to our glorification, without any promise to support that faith in reference to the point on which it is exercised, is a desperation that argues as well the absence of true faith as it does of right reason. Multitudes of such persons are continually deploring their want of faith, even where they have the clearest and most explicit promises; and yet, strange to tell, risk their salvation at the hour of death on a deliverance that is nowhere promised in the sacred oracles! "But who has got this blessing?" Every one who has come to God in the right way for it. "Where is such a one?" Seek the blessing as you should do, and you will soon be able to answer the question. "But it is too great a blessing to be expected." Nothing is too great for a believer to expect, which God has promised, and Christ has purchased with his blood. "If I had such a blessing, I should not be able to retain it."

Digitized by Google

All things are possible to him that believeth. Besides, like all other gifts of God, it comes with a principle of preservation with it; "and upon all thy glory there shall be a defence." "Still, such an unfaithful person as I cannot expect it." Perhaps the infidelity you deplore came through the want of this blessing: and as to worthlessness, no soul under heaven deserves the least of God's mercies. It is not for thy worthiness that He has given thee any thing, but for the sake of his Son. You can say, "When I felt myself a sinner, sinking into perdition, I did then flee to the atoning blood, and found pardon: but this sanctification is a far greater work." No; speaking after the manner of men, justification is far greater than sanctification. When thou wert a sinner, ungodly, an enemy in thy mind, by wicked works, a child of the devil, an heir of hell, God pardoned thee on thy casting thy soul on the merit of the great sacrificial Offering: thy sentence was reversed, thy state was changed, thou wert put among the children, and God's Spirit witnessed with thine that thou wert His child. What a change! and what a blessing! What then is *this* complete sanctification? It is the

Digitized by Google

cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed; it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin; it is the making one, who is already a child of God, more holy, that he may be more happy, more useful in the world, and bring more glory to his heavenly Father. Great as this work is, how little, humanly speaking, is it when compared with what God has already done for thee? But suppose it were ten thousand times greater, is any thing too hard for God? Are not all things possible to him that believes? And does not the blood of Christ cleanse from all unrighteousness? Arise, then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy Ghost, and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord.

Art thou weary of that carnal mind which is enmity to God? Canst thou be happy while thou art unholy? Dost thou know anything of God's love to thee? Dost thou not know that he has given his Son to die for thee? Dost thou love him in return for his love? Hast thou even a little love to him? And canst thou love him a little, without desiring to love him more? Dost thou not feel that thy

Digitized by Google

happiness grows in proportion to thy love and subjection to him? Dost thou not wish to be happy? And dost thou not know that holiness and happiness are as inseparable as sin and misery? Canst thou have too much happiness or too much holiness? Canst thou be made holy and happy too soon? Art thou not weary of a sinful heart? Are not thy bad tempers, pride, anger, peevishness, fretfulness, covetousness, and the various unholy passions that too often agitate thy soul, a source of misery and woe to thee? And canst thou be unwilling to have them destroyed? Arise, then, and shake thyself from the dust, and call upon thy God! His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear; his hand is not shortened that it cannot save. Behold, now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation! It was necessary that Jesus Christ should die for thee, that thou mightest be saved; but he gave up his life for thee eighteen hundred years ago! and himself invites thee to come, for all things are now ready. Such is the nature of God that he cannot be more willing to save thee in any future time than he is now. He wills that thou shouldst love him now with all thy heart; but

Digitized by Google

he knows that thou canst not thus love him till the enmity of the carnal mind is removed; and this he is willing this moment to destroy. The power of the Lord is therefore present to heal. Turn from every sin; give up every idol; cut off every right hand; pluck out every right eye. Be willing to part with thy enemies that thou mayest receive thy chief friend. Thy day is far spent, the night is at hand, the graves are ready for thee, and here thou hast no abiding city. A month, a week, a day, an hour, yea, even a moment, may send thee into eternity. And if thou die in thy sins, where God is thou shalt never come. Do not expect redemption in death: it can do nothing for thee even under the best consideration: it is thy last enemy. Remember then that nothing but the blood of Jesus can cleanse thee from all unrighteousness. Lay hold, therefore, on the hope that is set before thee. The gate may appear strait; but strive, and thou shalt pass through! "Come unto me," says Jesus. Hear his voice, believe at all risks, and struggle into God. Amen and Amen!

In no part of the Scriptures are we directed to seek holiness *gradatim*. We are to come to

Digitized by Google

God as well for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin, as for an instantaneous pardon. Neither the *seriatim* pardon, nor the *gradatim* purification, exists in the Bible. It is when the soul is purified from all sin that it can properly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ:—as the field may be expected to produce a good crop, and all the seed vegetate, when the thorns, thistles, briers, and noxious weeds of every kind are grubbed out of it.

From every view of the subject, it appears that the blessing of a clean heart, and the happiness consequent on it, may be obtained in this life; because here, not in the future world, are we to be saved. Whenever, therefore, such blessings are offered, they may be received; but all the graces and blessings of the gospel are offered at all times; and when they are offered, they may be received. Every sinner is exhorted to turn from the evil of his way, to repent of sin, and supplicate the throne of grace for pardon. In the same moment in which he is commanded to turn, in that moment he may and should return. He does not receive the exhortation to repentance to-day

Digitized by Google.

that he may become a penitent at some future time. Every penitent is exhorted to believe on the Lord Jesus, that he may receive remission of sins:—he does not, he cannot understand that the blessing thus promised is not to be received to-day, but at some future time. In like manner, to every believer the new heart and the right spirit are offered in the present moment; that they may in that moment, be received. For as the work of cleansing and renewing the heart is the work of God, his almighty power can perform it in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And as it is this moment our duty to love God with all our heart, and we cannot do this till he cleanse our hearts, consequently he is ready to do it this moment, because he wills that we should in this moment love him. Therefore we may justly say, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." He who in the beginning caused light in a moment to shine out of darkness, can in a moment shine into our hearts, and give us to see the light of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This moment, therefore, we may be emptied of sin, filled with holiness, and become truly happy.

Such cleansed people never forget the hor-

Digitized by Google

rible pit and miry clay out of which they have been brought. And can they then be proud? No! they loathe themselves in their own sight. They can never forgive themselves for having sinned against so good a God and so loving a Saviour. And can they undervalue Him by whose blood they were bought, and by whose blood they were cleansed? No! That is impossible: they now see Jesus as they ought to see him; they see him in his splendor, because they feel him in his victory and triumph over sin. To them that thus believe he is precious; and he was never so precious as now. As to their not needing him when thus saved from their sins, we may as well say, as soon may the creation not need the sustaining hand of God, because the works are finished! Learn this, that as it requires the same power to sustain creation as to produce it; so it requires the same Jesus who cleansed to keep clean. They feel that it is only through his continued indwelling that they are kept holy, and happy, and useful. Were he to leave them, the original darkness and kingdom of death would soon be restored.

Unto Him who is able to keep-

" Mighty to keep.
All the day Sunday and six days the week.
Fifty two weeks in the year.

Google

THE PERFECTED

HOLINESS OF BELIEVERS.

BY RICHARD WATSON.

WE have already spoken of *justification, adoption, regeneration,* and *the witness of the Holy Spirit,* and we proceed to another as distinctly marked, and as graciously promised in the Holy Scriptures: this is the ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, or the perfected HOLINESS of believers; and as this doctrine, in some of its respects, has been the subject of controversy, the Scriptural evidence of it must be appealed to and examined. Happily for us, a subject of so great importance is not involved in obscurity.

That a distinction exists between a regenerate state and a state of entire and perfect holiness will be generally allowed. Regeneration, we have seen, is concomitant with justification; but the apostles, in addressing the body of believers in the churches to whom they wrote

Digitized by Google

their epistles, set before them, both in the prayers they offer in their behalf, and in the exhortations they administer, a still higher degree of deliverance from sin, as well as a higher growth in Christian virtues. Two passages only need be quoted to prove this:—1 Thess. v. 23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In both these passages deliverance from sin is the subject spoken of; and the prayer in one instance, and the exhortation in the other, goes to the extent of the entire sanctification of "the soul" and "spirit," as well as of the "flesh" or "body," from all sin, by which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward depravation of the heart; as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called "filthiness of the flesh."

The attainableness of such a state is not so

Digitized by Google

much a matter of debate among Christians as the *time* when we are authorized to expect it. For as it is an axiom of Christian doctrine, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord;" and is equally clear that if we would "be found of him in *peace*," we must be found "without *spot* and *blameless*;" and that the Church will be presented by Christ to the Father without "fault;" so it must be concluded, unless on the one hand, we greatly pervert the sense of these passages, or, on the other, admit the doctrine of purgatory or some intermediate purifying institution, that the entire sanctification of the soul, and its complete renewal in holiness, must take place in this world.

While this is generally acknowledged, however, among spiritual Christians, it has been warmly contended by many, that the final stroke which destroys our natural corruption, is only given at death; and that the soul, when separated from the body, and not before, is capable of that immaculate purity which these passages, doubtless, exhibit to our hope.

If this view can be refuted, then it must follow, unless a purgatory of some description be allowed after death, that the entire sanctifica-

Digitized by Google

tion of believers, at any time previous to their dissolution, and in the full sense of these evangelic promises, is attainable.

To the opinion in question, then, there appear to be the following fatal objections:—

1. That we nowhere find the promises of entire sanctification restricted to the article of death, either expressly, or in fair inference from any passage of Holy Scripture.

2. That we nowhere find the circumstance of the soul's union with the body represented as a necessary obstacle to its entire sanctification.

The principal passage which has been urged in proof of this from the New Testament, is that part of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul, speaking in the first person of the bondage of the flesh, has been supposed to describe his state, as a believer in Christ. But whether he speaks of himself, or describes the state of others in a supposed case, given for the sake of more vivid representation in the first person, which is much more probable, he is clearly speaking of a person who had once sought justification by the works of the law, but who was then convinced,

Digitized by Google

by the force of a spiritual apprehension of the extent of the requirements of that law, and by constant failures in his attempts to keep it perfectly, that he was in bondage to his corrupt nature, and could only be delivered from this thraldom by the interposition of another. For, not to urge that his strong expressions of being "carnal," "sold under sin," and doing always "the things which he would not," are utterly inconsistent with that moral state of believers in Christ which he describes in the next chapter; and, especially, that he there declares that such as are in Christ Jesus "walk *not* after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" the seventh chapter itself contains decisive evidence against the inference which the advocates of the necessary continuance of sin till death have drawn from it. The apostle declares the person whose case he describes, to be under the *law*, and not in a state of deliverance by Christ; and then he represents him not only as despairing of self-deliverance, and as praying for the interposition of a sufficiently powerful deliverer, but as thanking God that the very deliverance for which he groans is appointed to be administered to him by Jesus Christ. "Who shall de-

Digitized by Google

liver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is, also, so fully confirmed by what the apostle had said in the preceding chapter, where he unquestionably describes the moral state of true believers, that nothing is more surprising than that so perverted a comment upon the seventh chapter, as that to which we have adverted, should have been adopted or persevered in. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that OUR OLD MAN is crucified with him, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DESTROYED, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead IS FREED FROM SIN." So clearly does the apostle

Digitized by Google

show that he who is BOUND to the "body of death," as mentioned in the seventh chapter, is not in the state of a believer; and that he who has a true faith in Christ, "is FREED FROM sin."

It is somewhat singular, that the divines of the Calvinistic school should be almost uniformly the zealous advocates of the doctrine of the continuance of indwelling sin till death; but it is but justice to say, that several of them have as zealously denied that the apostle, in the seventh chapter of the Romans, describes the state of one who is justified by faith in Christ, and very properly consider the case there spoken of as that of one struggling in LEGAL bondage, and brought to that point of self-despair and of conviction of sin and helplessness which must always precede an entire trust in the merits of Christ's death, and the power of his salvation.

3. The doctrine before us is disproved by those passages of Scripture which connect our entire sanctification with subsequent habits and acts, to be exhibited in the conduct of believers *before death*. So in the quotation from Rom. vi. just given,—"knowing this, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that *henceforth* we

Digitized by Google

should not serve sin." So the exhortation in 2 Cor. vii. 1, also given above, refers to the present life, and not the future hour of our dissolution; and in 1 Thess. v. 23, the apostle first prays for the entire sanctification of the Thessalonians, and then for their *preservation* in that hallowed state, "unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. It is disproved, also, by all those passages which require us to bring forth those graces and virtues which are usually called the fruits of the Spirit. That these are to be produced during our life, and to be displayed in our spirit and conduct, cannot be doubted; and we may then ask whether they are required of us in perfection and maturity? If so, in this degree of maturity and perfection, they necessarily suppose the entire sanctification of the soul from the opposite and antagonistic evils. Meekness in its perfection supposes the extinction of all sinful anger; perfect love to God supposes that no affection remains contrary to it; and so of every other perfect internal virtue. The inquiry, then, is reduced to this, whether these graces, in such perfection as to exclude the opposite corruptions of the heart, are of possi-

Digitized by Google

ble attainment. If they are not, then we cannot love God with our whole hearts; then we must be sometimes sinfully angry; and how, in that case, are we to interpret that *perfectness* in these graces which God hath required of us, and promised to us in the gospel? For if the *perfection* meant (and let it be observed that this is a *Scriptural* term, and must mean something) be so comparative as that we may be sometimes sinfully angry, and may sometimes divide our hearts between God and the creature, we may apply the same comparative sense of the term to good words and to good works, as well as to good affections. Thus when the apostle prays for the Hebrews, "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you *perfect* in every *good work*, to do his will," we must understand this perfection of evangelical good works so that it shall sometimes give place to opposite evil works, just as good affections must necessarily sometimes give place to the opposite bad affections. This view can scarcely be soberly entertained by any enlightened Christian; and it must,

Digitized by Google

therefore, be concluded, that the standard of our attainable Christian perfection, as to the affections, is a love of God so perfect as to "rule the heart, and exclude all rivalry, and a meekness so perfect as to cast out all sinful anger, and prevent its return; and that as to good works, the rule is, that we shall be so 'perfect in every good work,' as to 'do the will of God' habitually, fully, and constantly." If we fix the standard lower, we let in a license totally inconsistent with that Christian purity which is allowed by all to be attainable, and we make every man himself his own interpreter of that *comparative* perfection which is often contended for as that only which is attainable.

Some, it is true, admit the extent of the promises and the requirements of the Gospel as we have stated them; but they contend, that this is the mark at which we are to *aim*, the standard toward which we are to aspire, though neither is attainable fully till death. But this view cannot be true as applied to *sanctification*, or deliverance from all inward and outward sin. That the *degree* of every virtue implanted by grace is not limited, but advances and grows in the living Christian throughout life, may be

Digitized by Google

granted; and through eternity also: but to say that these virtues are not attainable, through the work of the Spirit, in that degree which shall destroy all opposite vice, is to say, that God, under the gospel, requires us to be what we cannot be, either through want of efficacy in his grace, or from some defect in its administration; neither of which has any countenance from Scripture, nor is it at all consistent with the terms in which the promises and exhortations of the gospel are expressed. It is also contradicted by our own consciousness, which charges our criminal neglects and failures upon ourselves, and not upon the grace of God, as though it were insufficient. Either the consciences of good men have in all ages been delusive and over scrupulous; or this doctrine of the necessary, though occasional, dominion of sin over us is false.

5. The doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in the soul till death involves other antiscriptural consequences. It supposes that the seat of sin is in the flesh, and thus harmonizes with the pagan philosophy, which attributed all evil to matter. The doctrine of the Bible, on the contrary, is, that the seat of sin is in the

Digitized by Google

soul; and it makes it one of the proofs of the fall and corruption of our spiritual nature, that we are in bondage to the appetites and motions of the flesh. Nor does the theory which places the necessity of sinning, in the connection of the soul with the body, account for the whole moral case of man. There are sins, as pride, covetousness, malice, and others, which are wholly spiritual; and yet no exception is made in this doctrine of the necessary continuance of sin till death as to them. There is surely no need to wait for the separation of the soul from the body in order to be saved from evils which are the sole offspring of the spirit; and yet these are made as inevitable as the sins which more immediately connect themselves with the excitements of the animal nature.

This doctrine supposes, too, that the flesh must necessarily not only lust against the Spirit, but in no small degree, and on many occasions be the conqueror: whereas, we are commanded to "*mortify* the deeds of the body;" to "*crucify*," that is, to put to death, "the flesh;" "*to put off* the old man," which, in its full meaning, must import separation from sin in fact, as well as the renunciation of it in will;

Digitized by Google

and to "*put on* the new man." Finally, the apostle expressly states, that though the flesh stands victoriously opposed to *legal* sanctification, it is not insuperable by evangelical holiness; "for what the *law* could not do in that it was weak *through the flesh*, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be *fulfilled* in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 3, 4. So inconsistent with the declarations and promises of the Gospel is the notion that, so long as we are in the body, "the flesh" must of necessity have at least the occasional dominion.

We conclude, therefore, as to the *time* of our complete sanctification, or, to use the phrase of the apostle Paul, "the destruction of the body of sin;" that it can neither be referred to the hour of death, nor placed subsequently to this present life. The attainment of perfect freedom from sin is one to which believers are called during the present life, and is necessary to that completeness of "holiness," and of those active and passive graces of Christianity by which they are called to glorify God in this world, and to edify mankind.

Digitized by Google

Not only the time, but the *manner* also, of our sanctification has been matter of controversy: some contending that all attainable degrees of it are acquired by the process of gradual mortification and the acquisition of holy habits; others alleging it to be instantaneous, and the fruit of an act of faith in the divine promises.

That the regeneration which accompanies justification is a large approach to this state of perfect holiness, and that all dying to sin, and all growth in grace, advances us nearer to this point of *entire* sanctity, is so obvious, that on these points there can be no reasonable dispute. But they are not at all inconsistent with a more instantaneous work, when, the depth of our natural depravity being more painfully felt, we plead in faith the accomplishment of the promises of God. The great question to be settled is, whether the deliverance sighed after be held out to us in these promises as a present blessing? And from what has been already said, there appears no ground to doubt this; since no small violence would be offered to the passages of Scripture already quoted, as well as to many others, by the opposite opinion.

Digitized by Google

All the promises of God which are not expressly, or from their *order*, referred to future time, are objects of *present trust;* and their fulfilment *now* is made conditional *only* upon our faith. They cannot, therefore, be pleaded in our prayers, with an entire reliance upon the truth of God, in vain. The general promise that we shall receive "all things whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing," comprehends, of course, "all things" suited to our case which God has engaged to bestow; and if the entire renewal of our nature be included in the number, without any limitation of time, except that in which we ask it in faith, then to this faith shall the promises of entire sanctification be given; which, in the nature of the case, supposes an instantaneous work immediately following upon our entire and unwavering faith.

The only plausible objections made to this doctrine may be answered in few words.

It has been urged, that this state of entire sanctification supposes future *impeccability.* Certainly not; for if angels and our first parents fell when in a state of immaculate sanctity, the renovated man cannot be placed, by his entire deliverance from inward sin, out of the

Digitized by Google

reach of danger. This remark, also, answers the allegation, that we should thus be removed out of the reach of temptation; for the example of angels, and of the first man, who fell by temptation when in a state of native purity, proves that the absence of inward evil is not inconsistent with a state of probation; and that this in itself, is no guard against the attempts and solicitations of evil.

It has been objected, too, that this supposed state renders the atonement and intercession of Christ superfluous in future. But the very contrary of this is manifest when the case of an evangelical renewal of the soul in righteousness is understood. This proceeds from the grace of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, as the efficient cause; it is received by faith as the instrumental cause; and the state itself into which we are raised is maintained, not by inherent native power, but by the continual presence and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit himself, received and retained in answer to ceaseless prayer; which prayer has respect solely to the merits of the death and intercession of Christ.

It has been farther alleged, that a person de-

Digitized by Google

livered from all inward and outward sin has no longer need to use the petition of the Lord's prayer,—"and forgive us our trespasses;" because he has no longer need of pardon. To this we reply, 1. That it would be absurd to suppose that any person is placed under the necessity of "trespassing," in order that a general prayer designed for men in a mixed condition might retain its aptness to every particular case. 2. That trespassing of every kind and degree is not supposed by this prayer to be continued, in order that it might be used always in the same *import*, or otherwise it might be pleaded against the renunciation of any trespass or transgression whatever. 3. That this petition is still relevant to the case of the entirely sanctified and the evangelically perfect, since neither the perfection of the first man nor that of angels is in question; that is a perfection measured by the perfect law, which, in its obligations, contemplates all creatures as having sustained no injury by moral lapse, and admits therefore, of no excuse from infirmities and mistakes of judgment; nor of any degree of obedience below that which beings created naturally perfect, were capable of rendering. There may,

Digitized by Google

however, be an entire sanctification of a being rendered *naturally* weak and *imperfect*, and so liable to mistake and infirmity, as well as to defect in the *degree* of that absolute obedience and service which the law of God, never bent or lowered to human weakness, demands from all. These defects, and mistakes, and infirmities may be quite consistent with the entire sanctification of the soul and the *moral* maturity of a being *naturally* infirm and imperfect. Still further, if this were not a sufficient answer, it may be remarked, that we are not the ultimate judges of our own case as to our "trespasses," or our exemption from them; and we are not, therefore, to put ourselves into the place of God, "who is greater than our hearts." So, although St. Paul says, "I know nothing by myself," that is, I am conscious of no offence, he adds, "yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord:" to whom, therefore, the appeal is every moment to be made through Christ the Mediator, and who, by the renewed testimony of his Spirit, assures every true believer of his acceptance in his sight.

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

REV. G. PECK, D.D.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

THE Oneida Conference met at Norwich, August 21, 1839. Bishop Hedding presided. I had previously sent the trustees of the seminary a letter dissolving my connection with the institution. I was appointed presiding elder of the Susquehanna District, and also elected a delegate to the General Conference. The appointments were read Thursday evening, and my first act in my new position was early the next morning to behold the distress and the tears, and hear the protest, of a young man who had been set down for that same Canaan Circuit to which I was sent in 1820, when it was almost a wilderness. Now a railroad ran through the center, and good roads traversed it in every direction; the people were

Digitized by Google

living in comfort, and not a few were becoming rich. Still, the Bishop was so far moved by this young preacher's anguish of soul that he released him from the unwelcome appointment, and left him in the hands of the presiding elder for another, if any could be found worthy of him. The district over which I was appointed to preside comprised, in 1839, fifteen appointments, twenty preachers, and about four thousand members.

I spent the Sabbath succeeding the Conference at Cazenovia, where I heard Bishop Hedding preach a great sermon, which stirred the depths of my soul; and then, bidding farewell to my many valued friends there, returned to Kingston, the place fixed upon as our residence.

The early part of this year was to me a memorable period on account of certain religious experiences which, not without much reflection and some hesitation, I have concluded to record more at length than has been my custom.

I was not conscious of any spiritual decline, but, on the contrary, felt that I was advancing. The evidence of my acceptance with God was clear. From the time of my conversion, and especially from the time of my entrance into the

Digitized by Google

ministry, I had striven to exercise a constant faith, "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men," to be obedient to every Divine call, yielding a willing service. Still, I was not at rest. Grateful for all that I had received, I felt that there were better things in store for me. I began more and more to hunger for deeper spirituality, a stronger faith, a prompter and more complete victory over temptation, a new advance into better light and richer joy.

At my first quarterly meeting on the district I preached on the subject of holiness, with no great satisfaction to my own mind, but in pursuance of a determination to seek a deeper work of grace in my own soul and preach it to others. The next week I went to a camp-meeting in M'Clure's Settlement, on the Lanesborough Circuit, where I preached three times with unusual liberty, my yearning after a clean heart constantly increasing. It was a time of rejoicing and of power. Two brethren were active and useful in the meeting, and attracted my attention. One was Major Dixon, a great and good layman, famous as a leader in the prayer-meetings, which were in his charge throughout

Digitized by Google

the entire week. His control over a crowd was something wonderful. He issued his orders with the air of a general on the field of battle. When he shouted, "Power! power! On, brethren, on!" it was like the storming of a battery; and when he paused and said, "Hark! hark! Silence," the stillness of night followed. None of the preachers interfered with his management. There was always unity of design, perfect harmony, and uniform success in his plans. His equal, in his own line of service, I never saw.

The other one referred to was Dayton F. Reed, afterward a member of the Newark Conference, and now, I doubt not, in the home above. He had been for a short time at the Cazenovia Seminary, but could not confine himself to study. He was at this time a young man of about twenty-one years of age, deeply pious, enthusiastic, with a very acute and active mind, and a reputation for eccentricity. He had received license as an exhorter, and on the strength of the authority bestowed was constantly preaching. He came to me on Sunday morning, and said that he thought that God required him to "sound the alarm somewhere" that day. I told him that older men must occupy the stand;

Digitized by Google

but that if he felt like it he might, at the close of the morning sermon, mount a certain wagon that stood a little way off, and preach till the time for the afternoon service to as large a congregation as he could gather. This seemed to please him, and as soon as the morning service closed he mounted the wagon, and with all the strength of his lungs shouted, "All you who want to hear the crazy boy talk for a while draw near." The whole multitude gathered about him, and he held them for two hours listening to an argumentative and convincing discourse on the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, the certainty of a general judgment, and the eternal doom of the lost. I stayed to hear every word of the sermon. For conclusiveness of argument, originality of illustration, and forcible appeal, I have seldom heard its equal.

The next week I attended another camp-meeting in South Canaan, during the progress of which I preached four sermons. My spiritual necessities were pressing more heavily than ever upon my heart. We closed Saturday morning with a sacramental service. As I was making some remarks after the sacrament I came, without any previous intention, to speak

Digitized by Google

of my own religious state, and observed that my experience had been somewhat variable, and of too low a grade, but that I expected to be "made perfect in love in this life." This accidental allusion, as it seemed, to a solemn question which I had answered at the time of my ordination and reception into Conference membership, fell upon my own soul with so much weight that I could not refrain from weeping.

Spending a Sunday in my quarterly meetings at Dundaff and Carbondale, I returned home, where I remained several days suffering great mental depression, and feeling an increasing self-abhorrence and thirst after God.

The next Sunday, in the love-feast at Gibson, several clear testimonies were given to the enjoyment of perfect love. I began now to feel the blessing near, and was more than ever fixed in my purpose to seek until I attained it. Monday morning, September 30, I woke in the spirit of penitence and prayer. The Rev. William Reddy, one of the preachers on the circuit, led the family devotions in the house where we lodged. As he read the fifty-first psalm the words came home to my mind with new light and power, and pierced my soul like sharp ar-

Digitized by Google

rows. During his prayer my tears flowed freely, and it was only by strong effort that I refrained from weeping aloud. As we were traveling in the same direction that morning I took a seat with Mr. Reddy in his carriage, and led my horse. He had told us something the day before of the possession of the blessing, and I wished to converse with him on the subject. His account of his past experience and his present enjoyments was modest, clear, and, as I judged, scriptural. He was much younger than I, but I was ready to be taught by any messenger whom God might send, so I fully opened my mind to him. My hunger and thirst for holiness were increased by our communings, and when our roads diverged and I left this dear brother and rode on alone till night, I prayed with every breath.

Tuesday, October 1, I rose, in the spirit of prayer, and resumed my homeward journey. I crossed the Susquehanna at Tunkhannock, and rode forward in inexpressible anguish. When passing through the forest and solitary places, where there was none but God to hear, I uttered aloud my burning supplication for a clean heart. I came to a stream where the bridge

Digitized by Google

had been swept away in a recent flood, and as I was preparing to ford it these words came with power to my soul, "*O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*" As my horse entered the water, and went in deeper and deeper, the great deep of my soul was broken up, and I wept aloud, with exclamations of self-condemnation and self-abhorrence. My whole being seemed dissolved in a torrent of godly sorrow; but in a moment I caught encouragement from the language of the prophet. It implied a Divine wish that men would hearken. I was most assuredly willing, eager to hear the voice Divine. Quick as lightning I felt that God would bless me and write his commandments on my heart. An indescribable change passed through all the avenues of my spirit. God seemed to be there, in the glory of his grace. I melted like wax in the presence of the Lord. I sank into nothing. Christ was all, elevated upon the throne of his holiness. As my horse gained the shore I felt that I, too, was emerging from troubled waters and gaining the land of rest. In the fullness of my joy I wept

Digitized by Google

aloud and gave glory to God in the highest. I went on my way exulting in God, the holy and adorable God, whose glory I now saw, as never before, impressed upon mountain and rock, forest and river, and whose presence and favor I felt so powerfully that I seemed almost in heaven. In this inexpressibly happy state of mind I reached my home in the evening, scarcely knowing how I had passed over the road.

This was the way in which God led me, and for his glory, and with devout gratitude, I pen the narrative. I write not for "the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world." My years are passing, and soon, to me, neither the praise nor the censures of men will possess any value. Still, when my eyes no more behold the light, other eyes may rest upon this page, and the record is made with the humble hope that here and there a reader whose soul thirsts for the living God may be thereby encouraged, and therefrom gain, possibly, a little light.

I would also add, with humble gratitude and giving God all the glory, that the impulse which my religious life then received has helped me ever since, even to this hour. From that

Digitized by Google

day I have had a stronger faith, a deeper joy, a clearer evidence of my acceptance with God, a readier and more thorough victory over temptations of every kind. I have labored to exercise a faith which would enable me to hold my position, and I have never wholly failed. Gloom has gathered about me at times, but the light has always returned. A faith that constantly appropriates the blood of Christ is able to maintain, in the soul, a constant fellowship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In regard to the duty of relating what God has done for us, one cannot well judge for another. I have seldom felt that I was called to say much in mixed assemblies about this peculiar experience; still there certainly are times and occasions when an unostentatious profession may not only be allowable, but beneficial. When earnest Christians commune one with another in regard to the possibilities of the religious life, and are of one heart and one mind, waiting for the salvation of God, it is certainly right for each to tell all that God has done for him. This question came before me at an early period of my own experience, and I

Digitized by Google

find my conclusions thus set down in a memorandum made at the time:—

"1. God should be acknowledged in his gifts whenever an opportunity occurs which promises good results. 2. The example of eminent Christians, both the living and the dead, encourages us in this course. 3. The help and encouragement which such relations afforded me when I was athirst for full salvation, convince me that they may be of service to others in like circumstances."

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

ALFRED COOKMAN.

His biographer, Rev. Dr. Ridgeway, introduces this important event in the life of our sainted friend, immediately after a letter to Rev. Andrew Longacre, in which he says:—

"I praise the Lord for what I have enjoyed in my own soul; the flame of heaven's love has been burning brightly upon the altar of my heart, and these circumstances to which I have made allusion, viz., the conversion of my fellow-mortals, have been like fuel thrown upon the fire to add to the power and brilliancy of the flame. I often look at myself, Andrew; and when I call to mind my manifold shortcomings and repeated backslidings; when I remember my constant wanderings, both to the right hand and to the left, I am lost in wonder and astonishment that my Saviour should be so kind and

Digitized by Google

good as to lavish upon me such unnumbered and undeserved blessings,—that He should choose me as one of His creature instruments to extend the honor of the Redeemer's name. I need and earnestly desire to love Him more and serve Him better; to have every power of my nature consecrated upon the altar of His cause; in a word, to be sanctified throughout, soul, body, and spirit; for I verily believe that, if we would be eminently useful as well as supremely happy, we must love God with all our soul, mind, and strength. I certainly should feel very happy if I thought I had so secured your confidence as to prompt you feelingly and conscientiously to array my poor unworthy self with so many noble and excellent qualities. Perhaps that sentence was penned, like many of my own, from impulse; for I am sure that were you to bestow upon me the least scrutiny, my deformities, physical, mental, and moral, would induce you to start back astonished. One thing, though, is perfectly certain: I love my friends, and covet their esteem and regard."

This extract shows how the mind of our dear brother was led. His biographer writes:—

"All who remember the expression of genu-

Digitized by Google

ine modesty which Alfred Cookman's face always wore, will appreciate the self-deprecating reference with which he meets his friend's tribute to his personal qualities. I can almost see the girlish blush which mantles his youthful brow at the mention of these excellences. But the feature of this first letter in his ministerial life which is most significant, is the ardent breathings which it manifests for entire consecration to God. The leaven of his mother's advice was already working. Circumstances were close at hand which were distinctly to impress his whole subsequent career. In the providence of God he was thus early brought into contact with influences which gave definitive shape to his views and experiences on the great doctrine which was henceforth to occupy so much of his thoughts, and to the maintenance and propagation of which his talents and time were to be so signally and so successfully devoted. He shall speak for himself:—"

"Frequently I felt to yield myself to God, and pray for the grace of entire sanctification; but then this experience would lift itself in my view as a mountain of glory, and I would say it is not for me, I could not possibly scale that

Digitized by Google

shining summit; and if I could, my besetments and trials are such I could not successfully maintain so lofty a position. While thus exercised in mind, Bishop Hamline, accompanied by his devoted wife, came to New Town, one of the principal appointments on the circuit, that he might dedicate a church which we had been erecting for the worship of God. Remaining about a week, he not only preached again and again, and always with the unction of the Holy One, but took occasion to converse with me pointedly respecting my religious experience. His gentle and yet dignified bearing, devotional spirit, beautiful Christian example, unctuous manner, divinely illuminated face, apostolic labor and fatherly counsels, made the profoundest impression on my mind and heart. I heard him as one sent from God, and certainly he was; his influence, so hallowed and blessed, has not only remained with me ever since, but even seems to increase as I pass along in my sublunary pilgrimage. Oh, how I bless and praise God for the life and labors of the beloved Bishop Hamline!

"One week-day afternoon, after a most delightful discourse, he urged us to seize the

Digitized by Google

opportunity, and *do* what we had often desired and resolved and promised to do, viz., 'as believers yield ourselves to God as those who were alive from the dead, and from that hour trust in Jesus as our Saviour from all sin.' Kneeling by myself, I brought an entire consecration to the altar. But some one will say, 'Had you not done that at the time of your conversion?' I answer, Yes; but with this difference: then I brought powers dead in trespasses and sin; now I would consecrate powers permeated with the new life of regeneration; I would offer myself a living sacrifice; then I gave myself away; but now, with the increased illumination of the Spirit, I felt that my surrender was more intelligent and specific and careful,—it was my hands, my feet, my senses, my attributes of mind and heart, my hours, my energies, my reputation, my worldly substance, my every thing, without reservation or limitation. Then I was anxious for pardon; but now my desire and faith compassed something more,—I wanted the conscious presence of the Sanctifier in my heart. Carefully consecrating every thing, I covenanted with my own heart and with my heavenly Father that

Digitized by Google

this entire but unworthy offering should remain upon the altar, and henceforth I will please God by believing that the altar (Spirit) sanctifieth the gift. Do you ask what was the immediate effect? I answer, peace—a broad, deep, full, satisfying, and sacred peace. This proceeded not only from the testimony of a good conscience before God, but likewise from the presence and operation of the Spirit in my heart. Still I could not say that I was entirely sanctified, except as I had sanctified myself to God.

"The following day, finding Bishop and Mrs. Hamline, I ventured to tell them of my consecration and faith in Jesus, and in the confession realized increasing light and strength. A little while after, it was proposed by Mrs. Hamline that we spend a season in prayer. Prostrated before God, one and another prayed; and while thus engaged, God for Christ's sake gave me the Spirit as I had never received it before, so that I was constrained to conclude and confess that the great work of heart-purity that I have so often prayed and hoped for is wrought in me—even in me. Wonderful! God does sanctify my soul. I cannot doubt it—oh, no!

Digitized by Google

"'Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.'

"The evidence in my case was as direct and indubitable as the witness of sonship vouchsafed at the time of my adoption into the family of heaven. Need I say that the experience of sanctification inaugurated a new epoch in my religious life? Some of the characteristics of this higher life were blessed rest in Jesus, a clearer and more abiding experience of purity through the blood of the Lamb. What a conscious union and constant communion with God! What increased power to do and to suffer the will of my Father, a steadier growth in grace, what delight in the Master's service, what fear to grieve the infinitely Holy Spirit, what love for and desire to be with those who love holiness, what access and confidence in prayer, what interest and comfort in religious conversation, what illumination and joy in the perusal of the blessed Word, what increased unction and power in the pulpit."

Such is the account of his entire sanctifica-

Digitized by Google

tion by the Holy Spirit, given by this servant of Christ after more than a dozen years had elapsed; and when, if sober reflection could have corrected the errors of youth, it might be supposed it would have done so. Who can read a statement so simple and straightforward, so evidently faithful to the exercises of the soul, and so entirely consistent with the statements of conversion and restoration he had previously made with so much candor and explicitness, and for a moment question the fact of the remarkable change which he here records? Shall we receive the testimony to the change which occurred when "all alone with Jesus" in the church at Carlisle; shall we accept the testimony to his ecstatic joy when, with a renewed sense of pardon, he leaped into his father's arms at the camp-meeting near Washington, and reject or doubt this testimony to the experience of "heart purity," the evidence of which he affirms was as direct and indubitable as the witness of sonship at the time of his adoption? Certainly he was as capable of understanding the correctness of the workings of his self-consciousness in the one case as in the other, and also of interpreting these workings in the light

Digitized by Google

of Holy Scripture. Here we see the same definiteness as there; now, as then, he seeks for a distinct blessing, which he thinks is comprehended in the provisions and promises of the Gospel, and in answer to his faith it is given, accompanied with its appropriate evidence.

This blessing, the witness to which was immediate and direct, did not pass away in a moment; it did not subside with the occasion, as any casual emotion might do, but was abiding, and constituted an "epoch" in his experience, attended with characteristics which he had time to mark and prove. While I freely allow that the consciousness of the believer can not be an original source of doctrine, yet I must admit that when a doctrine is taught by fair inference in the Word of God, whether by command or by promise, or as a matter of history, the testimony of consciousness in the living believer is authoritative, and must be accepted in the case of that particular believer, and as an index to all who claim a similar experience.

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

REV. J. A. WOOD.

Mr. Fletcher says, "When you are solemnly called upon to bear *testimony* to the *truth*, and to *say* what *great things* God has done for you, it would be *cowardice* or *false prudence* not to do it, with humility."

It pleased the Lord to call me in early life to seek pardon and converting grace. I believe at ten years of age I first tasted the joys of redeeming grace and a Saviour's love. I remember as early as then to have realized a sweet satisfaction and delight in prayer and effort to obey God.

At the age of thirteen I joined the church. Through the blessing and grace of God, I have found a home ever since in the church of my early choice.

During the first five or six years of my ex-

Digitized by Google

perience I was often perplexed and distressed with doubts in regard to the reality of my conversion; arising from the fact that I could not fix upon the precise time when the change was wrought. I would often see people powerfully converted, and hear them tell of the place and the moment when their chains fell off, and their souls went free. The tempter would then whisper in my ear, and say, "You cannot tell *when* you were converted, and you never had those *deep convictions* or those *striking exercises* in religious experience of which many speak."

From this source I had no little trouble, and at times, for several years, I found it exceedingly difficult to hold fast my confidence. After many and severe trials on this point, the Lord enabled me to settle the matter; and a thousand thanks to his blessed name that many years have passed since I have doubted for a moment the verity of my early conversion.

The Lord removed my doubts by showing me that to know the *precise time* of my conversion was of but little importance; while the great question for me to settle was, Have I the *evidence* that I am *now converted?*

Digitized by Google

After I was led to see that to be able to know the precise time of my conversion concerned me but little, and to know that I am now in a converted state was my great concern, the question was soon settled by apprehending the abundant evidence which God always gives of a state of salvation. I found it was one thing to have evidence of a justified, converted state, and quite another to apprehend and understand that evidence.

From this time to September 7, 1858, I maintained a general purpose to obey God, and received many spiritual refreshings from the presence of the Lord, suffering but few doubts in regard to my justification and membership in the family of God.

During this period I was often convicted of remaining corruption in my heart, and of my need of purity. I desired to be a decided Christian and a useful member of the church; but I was often conscious of deep-rooted inward evils and tendencies in my heart unfriendly to godliness. I found my bosom foes troubled me more than all my foes from without. They struggled for the ascendency. They marred my peace. They obscured my spiritual vision.

Digitized by Google

They were the instruments of sore temptation. They interrupted my communion with God. They crippled my efforts to do good. They invariably sided with Satan. They occupied a place in my heart which I knew should be possessed by the Holy Spirit. They were the greatest obstacles to my growth in grace, and rendered my service to God but partial.

I was often more strongly convicted of my need of inward purity than I ever had been of my need of pardon.

God often showed me the importance and necessity of holiness as clear as a sunbeam. I seldom studied the Bible without conviction of my fault in not coming up to the Scripture standard of salvation.

I often commenced seeking holiness, but at no time made any great progress; for as I read and prayed, some duty was seen to present itself which I was unwilling to perform, and so I relapsed into indifference.

I never read Mr. Wesley's "Plain Account," nor any of the standards of Methodism on the subject of holiness, nor the memoirs of Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvosso, Stoner, nor Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers or Lady Maxwell, without deep

Digitized by Google

conviction on the subject, and more or less effort for its attainment.

I now see I was often on the very point of grasping the prize, and then would sink back, suffer defeat, and another season of comparative indifference upon the subject. I was often led to see my need of purity while studying for the ministry with Rev. William Hill, of Cambridgeport, Vt.

Brother Hill was an able Presbyterian minister, and for a number of years was pastor of a Presbyterian church in Newburg, N. Y. He became convicted of his need of entire sanctification, and obtained the blessing at a meeting for the promotion of holiness at Mrs. Palmer's in New York city. He lived it, professed it, and preached it, and for so doing was expelled from the Hudson River Presbytery, in April, 1844. Rev. Henry Belden was expelled at the same time for the same cause. They both united with the Congregational church. Brother Belden became pastor of a church in Brooklyn, N. Y. Brother Hill died in holy triumph at Bristol, Conn., July 31, 1851, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

The society and influence of that holy man

Digitized by Google

were a great blessing to me. I think more than one hundred times I have bowed with him in prayer in his study, and held sweet communion with God. Those seasons of devotion still linger in my memory as among the most precious hours of my early ministry.

By being convicted so often of my need of perfect love, and failing to obtain it, I, after a while, (like many others, I fear) became a little skeptical in regard to the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification, as a *distinct* blessing, subsequent to regeneration. I had no clear or definite ideas in regard to the blessing of perfect love, but came to think of it and teach it as only a deeper work of grace, or a little more religion. I taught, as many do, a gradual growth into holiness, or *modern gradualism*. I threw the whole matter into the world of indefiniteness and of vague generalities. I expected to grow into holiness somehow, somewhere, and at some time, but knew not how, nor where, nor when. I urged believers to seek a deeper work of grace, and to get more religion, but seldom said to them, "Be ye *holy*," "This is the will of God, even your *sanctification*," or, seek "*perfect love*."

Digitized by Google

I became somewhat prejudiced against even the Bible terms "*sanctification*," "*holiness*," "*perfection*," and disliked very much to hear persons use them in speaking of their experience. I was opposed to the profession of holiness as a distinct blessing from regeneration.

I became prejudiced against the special advocates of holiness; and at camp meetings and in other places I felt disposed to discourage and oppose direct efforts for the promotion of holiness. If a pious brother exhorted the preachers to seek sanctification, or the members to put away worldliness, tobacco, and gaudy attire, and seek holiness, I was distressed in spirit, and disposed to find fault.

During a number of years, this was about my state of mind upon this subject. And let me here record, that while hundreds of sinners were converted to God, in connection with my feeble ministry, I do not recollect a single case of a believer being entirely sanctified under my labors during the first nine years of my ministry, up to September 7, 1858. Let me further add, during this time I was grieved, from year to year, by seeing what might astonish hell, and fill heaven with lamentation—company

Digitized by Google

after company of young converts walking into backslidden, unsanctified churches, first to wonder, then for a while to be grieved, but finally to add another layer to the backslidden stratification.

In May, 1858, I was appointed to the Court Street Church Binghamton. I went there much prejudiced against the professors of holiness in that church, and they were, doubtless, somewhat prejudiced against me, as they had cause to believe that I would oppose them on the subject of holiness. I soon found, in my pastoral visitations, that where those persons lived who professed the blessing of holiness, there I felt the most of divine influence and power. I realized a liberty in prayer, and an access to God in those families, which I did not elsewhere.

And let me remark, while I was prejudiced against holiness as a *distinct* blessing, and against its *special* advocates, I did desire and believe in a deep, thorough, vital piety, and was ready to sympathize with it wherever I found it. I had attended prayer and class meetings but a few times before I saw clearly that there were those in that society whose experi-

Digitized by Google

ence and piety possessed a *richness, power* and *depth* which I had not.

The more I became acquainted with them, the more I was convinced of that fact, and the more deeply I became convicted of my remaining depravity and need of being cleansed in the blood of Christ. I also became convinced that those professors of holiness were Wesleyan in their faith, experience, and practice, while I had drifted away somewhat from the Bible and Wesleyan theory of Christian perfection.

Through the entire summer of 1858 I was seeking holiness, but kept the whole matter to myself. During this time none of the professors of holiness said anything to me on the subject, but, as I have learned since, were praying for me night and day. God only knew the severe struggles I had that long summer, during many hours of which I lay on my face in my study, begging for Jesus to cleanse my poor, unsanctified heart; and yet I felt unwilling to make a public avowal of my feelings, or to ask the prayers of God's people for my sanctification.

The Binghamton district camp-meeting commenced that year the first day of September.

Digitized by Google

About eighty of the members of my charge went with me to that meeting. During six days of the meeting, the sanctification of my soul was before my mind constantly, and yet I neither urged others to seek it, nor intimated to any one my convictions and struggles on the subject. The result was, six days of such deep humiliation, severe distress, and hard struggles as I never had endured before.

A number of the members present from my charge had once enjoyed the blessing, and had lost it. Some who professed to enjoy it were becoming silent upon the subject. With but very few exceptions, we, as a church were practically staving off and ignoring the doctrine and duty of entire sanctification. The Lord was evidently displeased with us, and so shut us up that our prayer meetings, in our large society tent, literally ran out. The brethren and sisters became tired with themselves, and tired with each other. Some of them were even tempted to strike their tents and go home.

On the last evening of the meeting, a faithful member of the church came to me weeping, a few minutes before preaching, and said,

Digitized by Google

"Brother Wood, there is no use in trying to dodge this question. You know your duty, and may as well commence seeking holiness first as last. If you will lead the way, and define your position as a seeker of entire sanctification, you will find that many of the members of your charge have a mind to do the same." The Lord had so humbled my heart that I was willing to do almost any thing to obtain relief. After a few moments' reflection I replied, "Immediately after preaching I will appoint a meeting in this tent on the subject of holiness, and will ask the prayers of the church for my own soul."

Glory be to God! the Rubicon was past. In an instant I felt a giving way in my heart, so sensible and powerful, that it appeared rather physical than spiritual. In a moment after I felt an indescribable sweetness permeating my entire being. It was a sweetness as real and as sensible to my soul as ever the sweetest honey was to my taste. I immediately walked up into the stand. The presiding elder requested me to exhort after his sermon. I replied, "I will, if the Lord will help." Just as he gave out his text,—Eccl. xii. 13, "Let us hear the

Digitized by Google

conclusion of the whole matter," &c., — the baptism of fire and power came upon me.

For me to describe what I then realized is utterly impossible. It was such as I need not attempt to describe to those who have felt and tasted it, and such as I can not describe to the comprehension of those whose hearts have never realized it.

The most of which I was conscious was, that Jesus had me in his arms, and that the heaven of heavens was streaming through and through my soul in such beams of light, and overwhelming love and glory, as can never be uttered. *The half can never be told!*

It was like marching through the gates of the city to the bosom of Jesus, and taking a full draught from the river of life.

Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! I have cause to shout over the work of that precious hour.

It was a memorable era in the history of my probation, a glorious epoch in my religious experience—*never*, NEVER to be forgotten. Jesus there and then—all glory to his blessed name! sweetly, completely and most powerfully sanctified my soul and body to himself. He *melted, cleansed, filled* and *thrilled* my feeble, unworthy soul with holy, sin-consuming power.

Digitized by Google

Glory be to God! Perfect love is the *richest*, the *sweetest*, and the *purest* love this side of Paradise. Angels have nothing better.

Well may the poet sing,

"O for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak!"

I had always been much prejudiced against persons losing their strength; consequently, as might be expected, when the Holy Ghost came upon me in the stand, surrounded by some thirty preachers, it was God's order to take control of both body and soul, and swallow me up in the great deep of his presence and power.

After about three hours, I regained sufficient strength to walk to the tent, and we commenced a meeting for the promotion of holiness. I told the brethren and sisters my purpose to ask their prayers as a seeker of holiness, and that Jesus had forestalled my design by accepting my soul the moment I consented to stand up for holiness, and was willing to be any thing or to do any thing to obtain it.

And let me here say, that a willingness to humble myself, and take a decided stand for

Digitized by Google

holiness, and face opposition to it in the church, and take the odium of being a professor of holiness in Binghamton, where that doctrine had been trailing in the dust for years, constituted the turning point with me. After I reached that point I seemed to have no special consciousness of believing, or submitting, or of making any effort; my whole being seemed simply and without effort to be borne away to Jesus.

Our meeting continued all night; and such a night I never experienced before. A large number of my leading members present commenced seeking holiness; and about every half hour during that whole night the glorious power of God came down from the upper ocean in streams as sweet as heaven. At times it was unspeakable and almost unendurable. It was *oppressingly* sweet—a *weight of glory.*

Every time the power of God came, one or more souls entered the land of Beulah, the Canaan of perfect love. Some shouted; some laughed; some wept; and a large number lay prostrate from three to five hours, beyond the power of shouting or weeping. Hallelujah to the great God! those present will never

Digitized by Google

forget that night of refining and sanctifying power.

What I received at the time Jesus sanctified my soul was only a drop in the bucket compared to what it has since pleased Him to impart. Since that hour, the deep and solid communion my soul has had with God, and the rich baptisms of love and power, have been "unspeakable and full of glory."

"O matchless bliss of perfect love!
It lifts me up to things above;
It bears on eagles' wings;
It gives my ravished soul a feast,
And makes me here a constant guest
With Jesus' priests and kings."

At times I have had an overwhelming sense of the Divine presence, and a sacred unction has pervaded my whole being. Especially this has been my experience while called to profess or defend this glorious salvation. Oh, how God has stood by and helped me in vindicating the doctrine and profession of holiness! I have often felt if there was but one man in the world to stand up for holiness, in God's name I would be that man.

The divine fragrance imparted to my soul,

Digitized by Google

when the Saviour cleansed and filled it with pure love, I have never lost for one hour; and I trust and pray I never may. The thought of that hour brings ever an indescribable sweetness in my soul. I make a record of this to the glory of God. Glory, honor, and eternal praise be to His blessed name, for ever and ever! His own arm hath brought salvation to my feeble, helpless soul. And I do love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, and strength. Yet I am nothing, and Jesus is my all. Sweet portion! Oh, the blessedness of this inward, spiritual kingdom! Oh, the depths of solid peace my soul has felt! It has often been

> "A sacred awe which dares not move,
> And all the silent heaven of love."

Oh, to know that God is mine; to feel that he dwells in my heart, rules my will, my affections, my desires; to know that He loves me ten thousand times better than I love Him—oh, what solid bliss is this!

> "My Jesus to know, and feel his blood flow,
> 'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

And now, after more than six years and a

Digitized by Google

half, during which to scrutinize and test the work of that hour, I am constrained to say I *know* the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin. I say this with a profound sense of my feebleness and unworthiness; for,—

> "'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
> For Oh, my God, it found out me."

Oh that I could describe the feeling of gratitude in my heart to God for past mercies, present favors, and future prospects.

Well may the poet exclaim,—

> "Oh, how can words with equal warmth
> The gratitude declare
> That glows within my ravished heart!
> But thou canst read it there."

Some of the precious results of the cleansing power of Jesus in my soul have been,—

1. A sacred nearness to God my Saviour. The distance between God and my soul has appeared annihilated, and the glory and presence of divinity have often appeared like a flood of sunlight, surrounding, penetrating, and pervading my whole being. Glory be to God, that even the most unworthy may be "brought *nigh* by the blood of Christ."

Digitized by Google

2. A sense of indescribable sweetness in Christ. The fact that he is "the rose of Sharon;" "the lily of the valleys;" "the brightness of his [the Father's] glory," and "is altogether lovely," has at times so penetrated my soul as to thrill and fill it with ecstatic rapture. O how glorious and lovely has the dear Saviour appeared to my soul, and how strong the attraction my heart has felt toward him! Often his glory has shone upon my soul without a cloud.

3. A deep, realizing sense of the *reality* of spiritual things. Bible truth has appeared as transformed into solid reality. The doctrines of the gospel have become to me tangible facts, and my soul has triumphed in them as an eternal *verity*.

4. A surprising richness and fulness of meaning in the Scriptures, which I had not before realized. Many portions of the word, which I had hitherto but little understood, and taken but little interest in, now appeared full of meaning, and exceedingly precious to my soul. The following passages have been applied many times to my soul with great power: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give

Digitized by Google

you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you forever*; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; *but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" . . . "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*" . . . "Now ye are *clean* through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye *abide in me.*" . . . "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." . . . "God is *love;* and he that *dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,* and *God in him. Herein* is our love *made perfect,* that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, *so are we in this world.* There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. *He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*"

5. A complete satisfaction and resting in Christ. Since then there has been no favorable

Digitized by Google

response from within to temptations from without. Before I often found elements in my heart siding with the tempter, and felt that all was not right within. There appeared to be an aching void, or a place in my soul, which grace had never reached.

But since Jesus sent the refining fire through and through my poor heart, I have been sweetly assured that grace has permeated every faculty and fiber of my being, and scattered light, love, and saving power through every part. Hallelujah to God! I have found satisfaction, rest, and exultation in Christ.

6. A great increase in spiritual power. This I have received in my closet devotions, in my pastoral duties, and especially in the ministrations of the blessed truth. Blessed be the Lord, I have learned by experience that men may receive the Holy Ghost in *measure* limited only by their *capacity* to *receive*, and feeble *ability* to *endure*. God could easily bless men beyond the power of the body to endure and live, if he were disposed to take them to heaven in that way.

This increase of power has delivered me from all slavish fear of man, or of future evil. It

Digitized by Google

has given me such a love to the Saviour and to his glorious gospel as to make all my duties sweet and delightful. Truly "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

7. A clear and distinct witness of purity through the blood of Jesus. The testimony of the Holy Spirit, and of my own spirit, to the entire sanctification of my soul, has been more clear and convincing than any I ever had of my regeneration; although I had no doubt of that for years before the Lord extirpated inbred sin from my soul. "Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight."

Dear reader, how I wish I could tell you how clear and sweet the light of purity has shone through the very depths of my soul! How I wish I could tell you the complete satisfaction I have realized since I obtained this pearl of great price! If I could only tell you all about the full and perfect love of Christ! But O, it can never be told! Its fulness, its richness, and its sweetness can never be expressed! You can know it only by experience, and this is your solemn duty and most exalted privilege. Will you not seek it? Will you not begin now?

Digitized by Google

A holy life is the happiest life, the easiest life, and the safest life you can live. Oh be persuaded to settle the matter at once, and begin now to seek for purity, and never yield the struggle until you obtain the glorious victory!

It may cost you a severe struggle; but victory will be yours, if you only persevere. When you have once become *fully decided* that you will never cease *consecrating*, *praying*, and *believing* until you have obtained the blessing, you will have surmounted your greatest difficulty, and it will not be long before the streams of pure love will flow through the depths of your soul.

But, dear Christian reader, in seeking for this priceless blessing, do not attempt to measure yourself by any thing *peculiar* in the experience of the writer, or of any other person. The Bible is our only rule of *faith* and *practice*. There are various operations of the Spirit in effecting the same work in the human heart.

In this narrative of my religious experience I have endeavored to give a simple statement of facts, regardless of what mistaken good men, or wicked men, may think or say. I would as soon deny God as to flee before the offense of

Digitized by Google

the cross, or flinch or quail under the reproach of Christ. Like Peter and John, I "cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard." I fully believe that to continue in the enjoyment of perfect love, I must confess the whole and take the consequences. Call it delusion who may; a blessed reality it is to my soul. I know it. I feel it. I have proved it, and I *must* declare it. I am *constrained* to

"tell to all around
Of the dear Saviour I have found."

With the grace of God, I intend to "stand up straight for Jesus;" though

"devils rage, and hell assail,
I'll fight my passage through;
Though foes unite, and friends all fail,
I'll seize the crown in view."

I shall be jealous of my own testimony if it does not stir up the devil.

I have tried, with all humility, to look to God for guidance, and have felt his blessing resting upon me while writing. I have not written so much for the critic's eye, as for those who are panting after holiness.

During many years of my religious experi-

Digitized by Google

ence, I feared lest I should profess too much, or more than I possessed; but since the Saviour cleansed and filled my soul with perfect love, I have had no fears in that regard. The intense sweetness, the superior excellence, and the divine glory of the perfect love of Jesus can never be exaggerated, nor, indeed, fully described. Thousands in the church of God, who have received this baptism of *love* and *power*, can testify that the most glowing description any mortal can give of it falls infinitely short of the reality.

When any soul can truthfully say, as Mrs. President Edwards did, "*My soul is filled and overwhelmed with light, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost,*" there is no danger of exaggeration.

I might have written much more in regard to my weakness, unworthiness, and imperfections, and would have done so, had I supposed it would honor Christ more than to write about the fulness of His grace, and the riches of His love.

My experience is not my own, and it is in the hope that my humble testimony to the *fulness* and *freeness* of the grace bestowed

Digitized by Google

upon me, the most unworthy, may encourage and lead others to avail themselves of this fulness of Christ, that I record my experience of the perfect love of Christ. I have given but a brief and imperfect sketch, a mere outline, of the mercies that the Lord has heaped upon His poor servant. *To Him be all the glory.*

Dear reader, seek holiness. At all hazards seek it. Expect no rest until your soul is made "free indeed" in the blood of Jesus. And when once you have tasted the blessedness of purity, you will never be able to be sufficiently thankful that you were induced to seek it. If you do not seek it, the period is not distant when you will never he able to forgive yourself for the neglect.

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

BISHOP FOSTER.

In 1849, during a most wonderful revival in Cincinnati, in which the subject of entire sanctification was made as important as justification, Dr. Foster, now Bishop, but then pastor of Wesley Chapel, entered into the experience of full salvation. The following narrative is said to have been addressed to Bishop Morris, and is a very clear experience. It was, by consent of the author, published in the *Guide*, in 1850:—

In the doctrine of holiness, as taught by our Church, I had long been a professed believer. (I am not certain that I was a clear believer.) My faith was sufficiently strong to give me, at times, great uneasiness of mind, and cause me to make some effort for its attainment. These efforts often were greatly blessed to me, but I always failed to obtain. This continued a num-

Digitized by Google

ber of years. Eventually, when the work of holiness began to be more talked of, and more extensively professed, from the fact that I had failed to obtain it, and because of indiscretions in the lives and language of some who professed it, and from heresies in the instructions of some who taught it, and particularly because I was myself somewhat spoiled with false philosophy, I imbibed a strong antipathy against the whole subject. This opposition of mind, unacknowledged to myself, increased, and became more and more unsettled and deadly. Finally I could have no patience to hear the subject introduced. My whole mind recoiled at it. I felt contempt for those who professed it, and even carefully refrained from naming it in my prayers.

I could not entertain the thought of ever professing, and I scarcely desired to enjoy it. Yet, during all this time, I was at intervals tremendously roused up, and convicted, but straightway relapsed again. During all this dark period I was not without religious comfort, often enjoying most sacred and heavenly communion with God, never wavering in my purpose, or for a moment renouncing my faith. But my mind was perplexed and confused, and

Digitized by Google

filled with prejudice, not against holiness itself, but against its profession, and particularly by myself. I once said to a dear friend who was conversing with me on the subject, and urging me to seek it (she was one who I believed enjoyed it), "If my enjoyment of it requires a profession, I do not desire it. I do not feel that I could receive it on such terms, or with such involvements." So dark had I become,—so dreadfully prejudiced.

During this period, as a consequence of this state of mind, and other causes, I became very much discontented with my position in the Church; the ministry became a burden to me; not so much preaching,—this I enjoyed; but the pastoral cares and burdens. I became complaining, and anxious to retire, resolved at the first opportunity to avail myself, and become a private local preacher. This was a season of great trial to me, and of many powerful temptations. I became at last completely wretched,—more a slave than a child. It was manifest to me that in this way I could not live. Something must be done. In the time of my extremity deliverance came. At a love-feast, at New street, (a colored Church, and I

Digitized by Google

had always doubted much the religion of these people) under the exercises of these simple, ignorant Christians, I was wonderfully blessed. My whole soul was stirred within me; my heart melted like wax; tears flowed profusely; I praised the Lord aloud. This was a great, timely, and permanent blessing. It continued almost without interruption up to the time which I am about more particularly to describe. My devotions became more spiritual, my duties more delightful, and my graces all acquired new life. In a word, I was greatly, divinely revived.

During this interval I was severely attacked with disease. I was brought low, for about one month prostrated on my bed, part of the time thought to be in a very precarious state, and for several days strictly kept from seeing any one. This affliction was blessed to me. My mind was gradually brought into a better, higher state. One night, about the time I began decidedly to convalesce, my mind became absorbed in meditations of the goodness of God to me, and my great ingratitude to Him. I may say, "He made all his goodness to pass before me," and all my sinful unworthiness

Digitized by Google

to pass before me. This exercise continued for several hours; more and more my soul became absorbed, until at last my heart seemed to break and melt within me. I wept, I sobbed, I convulsed and cried out. Oh, what a blessing was it which I then received! I could no longer refrain. I awoke my dear Sarah, unconsciously sleeping by my side, and told her what a great blessing I had received; and we wept and praised the Lord together. This was one of the most holy and heavenly influences I had ever felt on my heart. And now I began again to pant for holiness. My prejudices were not all gone, but they were greatly lessened, and I wrestled and prayed with new earnestness and desire for the victory.

As soon as I had sufficiently recovered to engage in public worship, which was about December 20th, I commenced preparation for a protracted meeting in my charge. Meetings were increased, means multiplied. Sabbath before New Year's we commenced daily meetings. The Lord was propitious. The work progressed in the Church. Many were revived, a number converted. My own heart shared largely in the divine manifestations. This continued

Digitized by Google

until Thursday, the 10th, when, at the evening service, the whole membership present were invited to join the penitents at the altar in prayer, for a deeper personal baptism, and for their unconverted friends. In this exercise my soul became peculiarly drawn out. Solicitude for my friends became intense, causing me to agonize with God on their account. I soon became unconscious of all that surrounded me, absorbed with my own suit. I had not been long thus engaged, when my attention was, as it were, forcibly drawn to my own case. A reproving finger seemed to point to my own unfaithfulness, and imperfection of religious character, as the cause why some of my friends remained unawakened, unconverted. Here my mind fixed; the impression becoming more and more distressing, until a sense of my unworthiness—nay, real sinfulness—became intensely painful, almost insupportable. Now I seemed again, as with the pressure of an invisible hand, forcibly conducted into the inmost chamber of my heart, and cherished sins and inward corruptions were revealed to me. How vile I seemed to be! What defilement covered my whole soul as a mantle! What a disparity

Digitized by Google

between me, and what a minister of Jesus ought to be! Never did I see inbred corruption in such a light before. I saw, I felt, that this was not the highest state of spirituality. Holiness to the Lord was presented to my mind. I saw, I felt, that it was attainable; that it was possible to all, possible to me. Oh, how I desired it! Now it seemed worse "than death my God to love, and not my God alone." But now came a struggle. The blessing seemed nigh me, within my reach, but how could I venture to receive it? I so unworthy! I, so likely to retain it but a day! It seemed precisely what my case required. With new clearness, its necessity and nature were manifested. It was plain, manifest, irresistible, that it was the will of God, even my sanctification. I felt the truth of His promises. Faith, now how easy, how plain! I could believe, I did believe, that my heavenly Father was ready to bestow upon me the great blessing. But now the controversy was in my will. Could I, would I, receive it? Would I acknowledge it to myself? Would I confess it to others,—that blessing, after which I had often panted, and then again had almost condemned? Would I, now that my

Digitized by Google

Saviour seemed to bestow it, and incur the responsibilities? I wrestled and agonized on this point. The corruptions of my heart rose up still more distinctly to my view. The question then seemed to be, "Will you consent that Christ should take them all away, and make you holy—give you a clean heart?" That was the naked point. It was plain—a point of choice, of decision. It brought a struggle; but, thank God, I was enabled to say yes. When I came to this point I was calm. My agony had now subsided. It was a deliberate choice,—a choice that Christ should purify my heart, and a firm belief that this was all that was necessary; that, if I would consent He would do it.

Well, what then? I will endeavor truly to describe the spiritual state and exercise which ensued. I give it no name; I cannot. It may be holiness; I find nothing remaining contrary to holiness. On making choice, as above described, the first thing that I discovered was, that I could no longer pray as before. The spirit of earnest entreaty and desire was entirely removed. I had no joy, no special manifestations,—not so much as usual. I was rather without feeling of any kind. My heart seemed

Digitized by Google

completely emptied of everything, even a sense of want. At this state I felt no alarm; I was satisfied; I wanted nothing. A deep, immovable calm took possession of my heart. I have been happy a thousand times, but my present exercise was new and strange. It was rest,—rest in God. Inward content. This state continued during the next day, with, I believe, not a fear, not the slightest disturbance. In the evening, with many others, I continued my effort at the public altar, but I could not pray. It was impressed upon my mind as distinctly as though I had heard a voice, that my prayer had prevailed,—that I had been answered in the thing which I desired, though not in the manner I expected; that I ought therefore rather to praise than to pray; rather to confess than entreat. The witness had not indeed been given in the measure or mode anticipated, but a witness was given. Here, again, was a struggle between doubt and confidence, fear and assurance. "Is the work done?" my anxious heart inquired. Conflicting answers were returned. Fear said, "Doubtful." Faith replied, "Fear not, only believe." Here again the Spirit seemed to lead me into the inmost sanc-

Digitized by Google

tuary of my soul,—into those chambers where I had before discovered such defilement, and showed me that all was cleansed, that the corruptions which had given me such distress were dead,—taken away,—that not one of them remained. I felt the truth of the witness; it was so: I was conscious of it, as conscious as I had ever been of conversion. A change had been wrought in my heart—a radical conscious change. I was not only peculiarly exercised, but I was changed. I was a new creature; my heart had entered into new and higher existence. This was as evident as transition from darkness to light. Still I had no overflowing joy, no ecstatic rapture, no wonderful manifestations. I have had none yet. Four weeks have now elapsed; my mind remains in the same state, with scarcely a shadow of variation. This is one remarkable fact in my new life—it is even and sustained. I have been tempted, vilely tempted, but the adversary has found no response; I have had an easy and direct victory over all assaults. It was not with me as it was aforetime; faith brings me instant victory, almost without a conscious effort. I scarcely hope that this will continue, but am in daily

Digitized by Google

expectation of sore conflict. My peace continues—a deep, undisturbed, inward calm—a quiet content of the whole soul. I am now enabled to consecrate myself—may I say fully? to Christ, to be His. I am His. Glory to His name, I am his alone, His entirely, His forever! Glory to God for His "unspeakable gift!" Oh may I continue in this blessed liberty, this divine freedom from sin.

I believe I can live in this state. I did not once believe this. It is questionable if I ever sincerely desired it. It seemed like being overmuch religious. Upon this point my mind is changed. I now fully believe it is practicable to lead a holy life—to enjoy entire freedom from all sin, and complete consecration to God. Oh, how I desire it! and in my heart, by the grace of God, I purpose it. May the Lord Almighty, in whom is all my strength, keep me Himself unto final salvation!

To the praise of God I make this record. Painfully sensible am I of utter unworthiness. I have to contend with shame and confusion and self-abasement every moment. The recollection of the past torments me. Myself I abhor, as having loved corruption; but to Jesus

Digitized by Google

be glory for ever! "Jehovah has triumphed; His servant is free. In this place I stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." What a wonderful deliverance the Lord hath wrought! Ought not I to praise Him? Ought not I to publish this great salvation? What a rest He hath found for my soul! a rest of naked, simple faith. To Him be all glory for ever. Amen.

THINE LIVING OR DYING.

H. HARBAUGH.

Jesus, I live to thee,
The loveliest and the best;
My life in thee, thy life in me,
In thy blest love I rest.

Jesus, I die to thee,
Whenever death shall come;
To die in thee is life to me,
In my eternal home.

Living or dying, Lord,
I ask but to be thine;
My life in thee, thy life in me,
Makes heaven forever mine.

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

REV. E. M. LEVY, D.D.

PASTOR BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH, PHILADA.

"Oh, gift of gifts! Oh, gift of faith!
My God! how can it be
That thou, who hast discerning love,
Shouldst give that gift to me?

How many hearts thou mightst have had
More innocent than mine!
How many souls more worthy far
Of that sweet touch of thine!

There was a place, there was a time,
Whether by night or day,
Thy Spirit came, and left that gift,
And went upon his way.

Ah, grace! into unlikeliest hearts
It is thy boast to come,
The glory of thy light to find
In darkest spots a home."

It is, indeed, with a vivid sense of my personal unworthiness, and obligation to the God of all grace, that I yield to the earnest and fre-

Digitized by Google

quent solicitation of precious friends, by the relation of my experience. That I feel a reluctance in doing this, I will not deny,—not, however, from any indisposition to give to the adorable Redeemer my poor offering of praise, but from a conscious shrinking from even the appearance of personal importance. If, then, I speak of myself at all, it is that I may the better magnify that sovereign grace out of which has flowed to my soul a new life of strength, of rest, of joy, and of triumph. I cannot describe all I have experienced of God's wonderful dealings; but I desire, with humility and gratitude, to say I was made willing in the day of His power. He sweetly melted down my prejudices with His love; He shut my mouth forever from cavilling at any difficulties in the way of faith, and from limiting the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all unrighteousness, and the power of the Holy Spirit to keep us from all sin.

It pleased God in my earliest childhood to call me by His Holy Spirit. As far back as memory will allow me to go, I can recall seasons of great distress on account of sin. When other children around me were busy at play,

Digitized by Google

I would often invent some excuse to withdraw, that I might find a place where I could weep before God in secret.

The weary burden grew heavier with my increasing years. As fast as my mental powers were developed so as to understand, in a measure, the law of God, my condemnation and ruin became more alarmingly real. I cannot look back to this period of life as men usually do. They were not to me days of mirth, but days in which even childhood's laughter was turned into weeping, and its buoyancy into heaviness.

My parents, who were intelligent, cheerful, and exemplary Christians, were connected with a branch of the Presbyterian body, and resided, at this time, remote from the sanctuary of their choice, and opposite a Methodist Church. Here I would occasionally attend, and listen to the sainted Pitman, and other faithful men of God. It was at this time, when only thirteen years of age, that the burden of sin was removed, and I had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I can remember the very place, time and circumstances in which this wondrous change occurred. For many days I had gone

Digitized by Google

sorrowing. I cried unto God for the pardon promised to the penitent; but he seemed deaf to my entreaties. One night in the great congregation, I presented myself for prayer; but no peace came. I returned home, and retired at once to my chamber. The full-orbed moon was lighting it up with her silver beams. I knelt near the window, and heard, or seemed to hear, the voice of One saying unto me, "I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me." That promise was mine. It was my Father's assurance of a loving welcome. It was but a moment, and I was in his arms. It was a rapturous hour. All things were changed. Sorrowing and sighing fled from my bosom. The Spirit of God witnessed with my spirit that I was born again. "Being justified by faith, I had peace with God." I never afterwards had a doubt of my conversion. Even in the most unsatisfactory days of my Christian life, I could not question the reality of the work of grace in my youthful heart.

At once I felt a strong desire to preach the gospel. Some of my friends thought that it was nothing more than a childish fancy; and

Digitized by Google

others concluded that it was only the usual enthusiasm of a newly-converted soul. But, as I proceeded with my studies, the desire increased to such an extent, that it became a deep conviction of the mind. The "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel" was continually sounding in my ears; and, thanks be unto God! I was not disobedient to the heavenly calling.

In my twenty-first year, I was ordained pastor of the First Baptist Church, West Philadelphia, then just organized. Here God greatly blessed my labors in the salvation of sinners. The church for many years was favored with frequent outpourings of the Spirit. I often marvelled how one so partially consecrated could be so successful. I am conscious now that I was proud of my success, and that it was needful for God to humble and afflict me. It is of the Lord's mercy that I was not consumed.

After a pastorate of fourteen years, I accepted a call to Newark, New Jersey. Here, also, God wonderfully blessed my labors; and hundreds were added to the church. But oh, how were all my services, even the best, mixed with selfishness, ambition, and pride! A con-

Digitized by Google

sciousness of this often filled me with shame and sorrow. Then I would make a new effort to improve my life by more watchfulness, zeal, and prayer; and although failure was sure to follow, yet, not knowing of any better method, I would tread the same weary road over and over again.

Severe afflictions visited me. The sweetest voice of the household group was hushed; the brightest eyes were darkened in death; health failed; many friends proved unreliable; hopes withered; and the way grew rough and thorny. My unsanctified soul, instead of learning submission, became impatient of restraint, would sometimes murmur against the dealings of God with me, question his wisdom, and doubt his love. These feelings would not always prevail. There would be periods of relenting. Mortified at the indulgence of unchristian passions, I could not refrain from weeping before God with true contrition of heart; but it was only to return to the same bitter experience. That marvellous portrait which is hung up in the seventh chapter of Romans, and which portrays the fearful struggle between will and power,—between the evil that is hated and yet com-

Digitized by Google

mitted, and the good that is approved and yet not performed,—is a faithful picture of my condition at this time.

After a residence of ten years in Newark, I returned, in the autumn of 1868, to the scene of my early labors, and became pastor of the Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia. Here I found the religious condition of the members of my new charge as unsatisfactory as my own. They were in a cold, barren, worldly state. I have seldom seen a church more broken and paralyzed. I grieved for them with tender compassion. This solicitude in their behalf produced a fresh consciousness of my own imperfections. I groaned under the yoke of inbred sin. I hated sin. I felt that it weakened my moral powers, grieved the Holy Spirit, interrupted my communion with God, and impaired my usefulness. One Sunday afternoon I entered my school-room unusually depressed. A sense of utter helplessness came over me. I seemed so weak, so deficient in every qualification necessary for success in the work of the ministry, that I longed for death to relieve me from the responsibility of my office. As my tear-dimmed eyes surveyed the school, I was

Digitized by Google

painfully moved by the number of adult scholars who were unconverted. Among these were several of my relatives, and my own precious daughter. I returned to my study crying, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

In February, 1871, Mr. Purdy, an evangelist, was holding meetings in the Methodist church adjacent to mine. I was invited by the pastor to attend these efforts to promote Christian holiness. I went timidly at first, and yet I continued to go every afternoon for several days. There were divine influences drawing me there. Many Christians from different churches, and "elect ladies not a few," were also in attendance. Day after day, with meekness and gentleness, and yet with unwavering confidence, they told the story of long years of conflict, and of ultimate and complete triumph through simple faith in the blood that cleanses from all sin, of their soul-rest and abiding peace, of their power with God and man, and the fulness of their joy. At first I became deeply interested, and then my heart began to melt. I said, "These Christians are certainly in possession of a secret of wonderful power and sweetness." What can it be? Is it justification?

Digitized by Google

No; it cannot be that. I have experienced the blessing of justification; by it I have been absolved from all my past sins; by it I stand in the righteousness of Christ; and every privilege of a child of God, and every grace of the blessed Holy Spirit has been secured to me; but I do not realize that it has destroyed the power of inbred sin, or ended "the war in my members," or brought to me complete rest of soul. I have peace; but it is often broken by "fear which has torment." I am conscious of loving God; but like some sickly, flickering flame, I am expecting every moment to see it expire altogether. I have joy; but, like a shallow brook, the drought exhausts it. I have faith; but it is such a poor, weak thing, that I am in doubt, sometimes, whether it is faith at all. "I hate vain thoughts;" and yet they continue to come, and seem at home in my mind. I believe that Jesus saves from sin; and yet I sin from day to day, and the dark stains are everywhere visible. Prayer is inestimably sweet; but, alas! it often becomes an effort. To work for Christ is a great privilege; but it often wearies me, or degenerates into mere routine. The ordinances of religion yield

Digitized by Google

comfort and strength; but I find as often that all spirituality and power have retreated from them, leaving their channels dry. I sometimes get glimpses of Him whom my soul loveth; but, oh! how soon the bright vision fades, and, "He hideth Himself," is again the deep, earnest cry of my heart. Now, these believers have an experience altogether different from mine. Once, it is true, they felt as I feel, and mourned as I mourn, over broken vows, sinful tempers, intermittent devotions, and repeated failures. But a wonderful change is now manifest. "They are rooted and grounded in love." "Being made free from sin," they now bring forth fruit unto holiness. Having purged themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, they have become "vessels unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.'

My desires were kindled. An insatiable hunger seized my soul. To be saved from sin, to be "cleansed from all iniquity," to have a "pure heart and a right spirit," to be "dead indeed to sin, and alive unto God," to be made "perfect in love," and this not occasionally, but continually, even to the end of life, seemed too

Digitized by Google

good to be true; and yet it was precisely that moral condition which the salvation of Christ implies, and for which my heart thirsted, as the hunted roe "pants for the water-brooks."

Just at this stage of my experience, the meetings ended; and Mr. Purdy was compelled to leave for another appointment. Before leaving, however, a suggestion was made, that he might be induced to return and hold meetings in my own church. It was a surprise to me. I was not sure that my people would consent. I could do nothing, therefore, but leave it for the decision of the church on the coming Sabbath. I did so, and, greatly to my surprise, there was not the slightest objection raised. It was of the Lord.

During the ten days that preceded the meeting, I was more than usually prayerful. I commenced a careful examination of the doctrine of sanctification. I reviewed my theological studies. I could scarcely think, or read, or pray on any other subject. I conversed with intimate friends of my own and other denominations. Nearly all of them pronounced the views advanced as nothing else than unscriptural and pernicious errors. They admitted

Digitized by Google

the existence and universality of the disease, but could tell of no adequate remedy this side the grave. They allowed that the malady might be mollified; but, in this life they affirmed, it could never be perfectly healed. I searched the Scriptures; but alas! my "eyes were holden," so that I could not see that perfect deliverance from sin which God has provided, through the redemption of Christ, for his believing people. Those passages in the Word of God which require of all his children holiness of character, purity of heart, the entire sanctification of the soul, body, and spirit, I was led to regard, from educational training, as marks—very high indeed—after which every Christian should aspire, but to which no one could ever attain: or else as figurative expressions, indicating that at conversion we were made, in some *judicial* sense, holy before God.

These views, however, could no longer satisfy me. I had an intense longing for something better. With another I could say, "Of all miseries, the bondage of sin is the most miserable. It is worse than sorrow, worse than pain. It troubles all the peace of life. It turns sunshine into darkness. It imbitters all pleasant

Digitized by Google

fountains, and poisons the very blessings of God. Alas! we have felt this sense of sin, and know that there is nothing like it. Life has brought many sorrows to us and many fears. Our hearts have ached a thousand times; but never have we felt any thing like the awful sense of indwelling sin."

> "I'm weary of the strife within,
> Oh let me turn from self and sin!"

The first day of our meeting had come. The church was well filled. I introduced Mr. Purdy as a brother who had been much blessed in promoting revivals of religion among the churches, and expressed the hope that his coming would be made a blessing to us. I had many misgivings, and a secret desire in my heart that he would say nothing about sanctification, but bend all his efforts to the conversion of sinners. This, however, was not his way. Like a wise master-builder, he commenced to lay the foundation broad and deep. He took our Confession of Faith and urged, from the teaching contained therein, that we should accept the doctrine of sanctification by faith. Our covenant was next produced; and here he reminded us

Digitized by Google

that in this we solemnly promised that we would so regulate our lives as to enable us to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Last of all, he spoke of our baptism as a beautiful symbol of our death unto sin, our burial with Christ, and our resurrection to a new and holy life. "According to your form of baptism," he said, "the body is buried in water, as the corpse is buried in the grave. In all your teachings on this subject, you insist that it is a figure of the believer's death and burial unto sin. But that is not all. You not only claim, in this act, that you die to sin, but that you also rise to a life of holiness. "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi.) With great emotion and emphasis, he said, "You have the type, the figure, the symbol: will you deny the doctrine, and make what distinguishes you as a

Digitized by Google

denomination a mere empty, lifeless ceremonial?"

After the sermon, a number of persons bore testimony to the fulness and completeness of their present salvation. They represented several evangelical denominations,—the Methodist, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Friend, the Baptist; and there was a beautiful harmony in all that they said. I had no reason to doubt the truthfulness of their statements. "I might question," I thought, "their logic, find fault with their theories, and reject their phraseology; but how could I dispose of their experience?" My heart was melted. My judgment was assailed as it had never been before. After the meeting, I returned to my study, fell upon the floor, and poured out my soul before God. I did not pray for pardon, but for purity. I did not seek clearer evidence of my acceptance, but to be "made free from sin," not in a judicial or theological sense, but by a real, conscious, inwrought holiness.

That night I was unable to sleep: I was completely broken down in heart before God. The vision of Isaiah seemed reproduced. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high

Digitized by Google

and lifted up." "Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

The morning at length dawned; and on every ray I could read, "Walk in the light as he is in the light." "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," as chanted by the seraphim, seemed floating through all the air. My justified soul was in love with this attribute of Jehovah. It seemed the most beautiful thing in the universe. As I thought of God, it was not so much his power or wisdom or justice or love that attracted my attention, as his infinite, spotless holiness.

That day, Friday, March 9, 1871, was observed by the church as a special season of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. My soul was in great agony. I can compare my experience on this memorable day to nothing else than crucifixion. It seemed to me that I had gone up with Christ to Calvary, and was transfixed to the cruel and shameful cross. A sense of loneliness and abandonment stole over my mind. "An horror of great darkness fell upon me,

Digitized by Google

and all the powers of hell assaulted my soul. The enemy brought before me, with tremendous force, my life-long prejudices, my theological training, my professional standing, my denominational pride. It was suggested that I must leave everything behind me, should I go a step farther in this direction. The dread of being misunderstood, of having my motives questioned, of being called "unsound in doctrine," of being slighted by my ministerial brethren, and treated with suspicion and coldness filled my heart with unspeakable anguish. Everything appeared to be sliding under my feet. My sight grew dim, my strength departed, and faintness, like unto death, came upon me.

This mental conflict, however, soon subsided. The storm-clouds passed away, and light began to stream in. I was now done with theorizing, with philosophical doubts and vain speculations. The struggle was over. I cared no longer for the opinions of men. I was willing to be a fool for Christ, and to suffer the loss of all things. I was like a little child: I cried out, "Teach me *thy way*, O Lord! and lead me in a plain path."

Digitized by Google

Just then the fountain of cleansing was revealed. Angel-hands seemed beckoning to me to enter it. Jesus stood before me with His bleeding wounds, saying, "Come in! Come in!"

I turned to my congregation, and said, "I stand before you to-day a poor, weak, and helpless sinner. I have tried to find the way of holiness by every possible means. All my efforts, my struggles, my prayers, my fasting, and my round of duties have proved miserable failures. God is making a wonderful revelation to my long-darkened understanding. I am confident now that it is not by growth, or by effort, or by works of any kind; 'for then would our salvation be of works, and not of grace.' 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' It is the blood that must cleanse and keep us clean. 'In that day, saith the Lord, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.' That day has come. There lies the fountain of my Saviour's blood. It was opened for me, even me."

I fell upon my knees, and bowed my face to

Digitized by Google

the floor. For a moment I felt that I was sinking in a great sea, and that all its waves were going over me. But they did not seem to be the waters of death. The congregation were singing,—

"I am trusting, Lord, in thee
Dear Lamb of Calvary,
Humbly at thy cross I bow;
Jesus saves me, saves me now."

The Spirit of God whispered those precious words: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It does now, this instant, cleanse! My faith laid hold of this wonderful truth. A strange peace entered into my soul. I exclaimed within myself, "I am free! My heart, my soul, my mind, my body, are washed in the blood of the Lamb!" It was all so strange, so new, so unlike anything I had ever experienced before, that I could not utter a word; and then the only sentiment of my heart was, "Lord, it is done! I am saved!"

When the meeting ended, I repaired immediately to the parsonage. I experienced great physical exhaustion, like Jacob, who was never

Digitized by Google

so weak as when he had just prevailed with the angel.

I threw myself into a chair, and at once the blessed baptism came. I seemed filled with all the fulness of God. I wept for joy. All night long I wept; all the next day, at the family altar, in the street, and in the sanctuary, tears continued to flow. The fountains of my being seemed broken up, and my heart was dissolved in gratitude and praise. My soul seemed filled with pulses, every one thrilling and throbbing with such waves of love and rapture that I thought I must die from excess of life.

At once I had a new and wonderful sense of the presence of Christ. Those words of Jesus were made real to me: "Abide in me, and I in you." I had now an abiding Christ. With Mrs. Edwards, I could say, "The presence of God was so near and so real, that I seemed scarcely conscious of anything else. I seemed to be taken under the care and charge of my God and Saviour, in an inexpressibly endearing manner. The peace and happiness which I hereafter felt was altogether inexpressible. The whole world, with all its enjoyments and all its

Digitized by Google

troubles, seemed to be nothing: my God was my all, my only portion."

The sovereign will of God seemed at once so sweet and blessed, that I felt lost in the thought that God ruled over and in me. I found myself praising Him for every trial, sorrow, disappointment, and loss. All my ransomed passions came rushing from their secret places to do homage to His holy and adorable will.

My sense of unworthiness was greatly quickened. I felt so small, so weak, so utterly nothing, I could no longer pray in the sanctuary, as had been my custom, in a standing position: I wanted to keep sinking lower and lower. And this desire brought a strange pleasure.

I felt a sweet spirit of forgiveness in my heart. It was easy for me to pray for those who had injured me: persons who had become repulsive to me appeared, all at once, as possessing many excellences. I saw so much more to admire, and so much less to condemn, in the people of God, that it seemed God had "made all things new."

My love for the brethren was much enlarged. Denominational distinctions disap-

Digitized by Google

peared; and my heart flowed out in tender affection for "all those that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

Answers to prayer were continually occurring. The promise was made good, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." I no sooner asked for a boon than it was granted. One, out of many instances of this nature, I wish to relate. During two or three weeks I had scarcely slept at all, first from excess of sorrow, and then from excess of joy. Night after night witnessed my utter inability to sleep. Mind and body began to show great nervous exhaustion, which only increased the tendency to wakefulness. One night after retiring, and suffering as before, it occurred to me, "Now, ask Jesus." At once I raised my heart in prayer, saying, "Blessed Jesus! I need sleep. Effort will not bring it. I now seek it from Thee. Let me go to sleep." Immediately I fell asleep, and continued to sleep soundly all that night, and every night since.

My mind became solemnly impressed with the personality of the devil. For several days, it is true, he was not permitted to attack my

Digitized by Google

soul in the slightest manner. For the first time in my life I was so free from all temptation, that I was not conscious of his existence. But it was only for a time. One afternoon, just as I took my seat in the pulpit, Satan stood at my side in dread personality. To my mental sight he appeared, as never before, fearfully and maliciously real. At once I became unconscious of all beside. He suggested such thoughts as these: "Your present experience is, I admit, very satisfactory. But will it continue? What will you do when these meetings shall end, and these birds shall have done singing, and all these Christians are gone to their several churches, and you shall be alone?" Words utterly fail to convey to another the malignant force of these Satanic utterances. But with humble boldness I answered, "I can do without the creature, but not without the Creator. Human sympathy and Christian fellowship are inexpressibly sweet; but they are not indispensable to my happiness or safety. Possessing Christ, I have all." "And he showed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said

Digitized by Google

unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now, Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech. iii. 1–4). At once I had such a ravishing view of the infinite loveliness and all-sufficiency of Jesus, that my heart glowed with new rapture, as the words of the poet came flashing upon my mind:—

"O Lord! I would delight in thee,
And on thy care depend;
To thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.

"When all created streams are dried
Thy fulness is the same:
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in thy name!

"No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in thee:
I must have all things, and abound,
While God is God to me.

Digitized by Google

"He that has made my heaven secure
Will here all good provide:
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I want beside?"

Instantly the devil fled, and I was dissolved in tears of gratitude.

Several weeks after this, while riding in the street-car, I was again fiercely assaulted by this enemy of all righteousness. Thoughts of evil darted through my mind like summer lightning. I remember well how, in former years, I would exert all my rational powers to put from me these vile suggestions. It used to be a mighty conflict between the powers of darkness and my own puny strength; and it seldom ended without leaving its stain, and involving my soul in great spiritual depression. But now, without an effort or a struggle, I found myself, like a fluttered dove, fleeing to Christ. In a moment, the thoughts of evil were gone, and my soul exulted in the triumphs of all-victorious faith:—

"The dove hath neither claw nor sting,
Nor weapon for the fight:
She owes her safety to her wing,
Her victory to flight."

Digitized by Google

The *personality* and *office-work* of the blessed *Holy Spirit* were revealed to my spiritual perceptions as they had never been before. He taught me more of his own adorable Being in one moment than I had learned from theological treatises during all my life. And oh! what a comforter he became to me! He seemed to regard me as a little, weak, convalescent child, that needed to be carried in the arms and comforted. He had been before my Reprover; but now he sweetly whispered, "No more reproof, no more wounding. I am come to comfort, to heal, to sanctify, and to 'abide with you forever.'"

Indeed, all the doctrines of the gospel at once became luminous in the presence of the Sanctifier. What was formerly a speculative conviction became now a wondrous reality. What once appeared in dim outline, like some beautiful landscape, partially revealed by moonlight, now glowed with distinct and golden splendor.

Life has become marvellously *simplified* and *natural*. I no longer work *for* liberty, but as *having* liberty; not *for*, but *from* life. That which before was either impossible, or at least difficult, is now natural and easy.

Digitized by Google

I do not find this life—what in my ignorance I once regarded it—one of mysticism, indolence, and self-gratulation, but a life of ceaseless activity amidst undisturbed repose; of perpetual absence of all weariness amidst perpetual employment. Neither do I find it a condition of stagnation. All life involves growth, and there are no limits to the possibilities of growth, in the life of faith. The more the soul receives, the more it is capable of receiving, and the more it yearns to receive. Because it has got some glimpses of its boundless wealth in Christ, it is ever crying "Give me more;" and nothing satisfies it, save an experience of development and growth, which is the result, not of effort and struggle, but of an inward and divine life.

Thus have I told the story of my life honestly and simply. We are not all led by the same route, and we must not force others to go our way: all we can do is to show *how* we have found rest, and *where* we have found it. Of one thing I am sure,—that this experience is not to be procured by any intellectual process of reasoning, or by growth, which is another name for works. It was not by searching, it

Digitized by Google

was not by discussion, it was not by intellectual insight into the mysteries of God, it was not by a gradual development, it was not by efforts or works of any kind, that I reached the point where I found rest and cleansing for my struggling and sin-stained soul. I am fully persuaded that I might have been saved thirty years of weariness and failure, if my poor blind heart had known God's way of holiness. It is the gift of God, bestowed, not upon him that worketh, but upon him that believeth. And hence in one short moment, by the exercise of faith in a perfect Saviour, the work was done: the body of sin was slain; my yearning desires were satisfied; my soul, long agitated, like the Galilean sea, was at rest, like a summer lake bathed with sunshine and peace. I have been conscious ever since, moment by moment, of the cleansing power of Christ's blood, of the preserving grace of the Holy Spirit, of the absence of all fear, all disquietude, all uncertainty, and the presence of abounding love, joy, and assurance.

And now, if these statements, which, after all, but half express the feelings of my heart and the workings of my mind, should shed

Digitized by Google

light on the path of some perplexed Christian, or clear away the difficulties with which some weary soul is struggling; if they should lead but one solitary disciple, pining for heart-purity and soul-rest, to turn from speculation, human reasoning, and self-effort, and receive Christ, "who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," I shall indeed rejoice; and all the glory shall be to "Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Amen!

PURITY OF HEART.

J. KEBLE.

Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs;
Their soul is his abode.

Still to the lowly soul
He doth himself impart,
And for his service and his throne
Selects the pure in heart.

Digitized by Google

EXPERIENCE OF

REV. DANIEL STEELE, D.D.

On this ever-memorable day, November 17, I pass the sixth mile-stone in the highway of holiness. Should I refrain from the utterance of praise to the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, to God the Father, and to the blessed Comforter, the stones beneath my feet would cry out. It may interest no one to listen to my thanksgiving anthem, yet I must pour it out into the ear of my adorable Saviour, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. The great Physician who hath wrought in me a perfect cure, shall have my testimonial as long as I have a tongue to utter or a hand to write and re-write the wondrous story. Why not be content with past testimonies? Where is the wife who is content with last year's avowals of love whispered into the ear of her husband? If she is to be found on the earth,

Digitized by Google

you will hear no song as you near her threshold, you will be illumined with no smile when you come into her presence. For there is no joy where there is no love, and love begins to die when it becomes dumb. The wife who lives this year without renewed confessions of tender affection, will be found next year in the court-house suing for a divorce. Six years ago my soul became the bride of Christ by an inexpressibly blissful union. Was I an enemy of Jesus up to that time? I was, during twenty-eight years, a servant, a friend, and a son. There is a gradation of amicable relations between an enemy and a spouse. Small Christian philosophers usually overlook this fact when they assert that there is no sharply-defined transition in Christian experience after justification.

Another reason why continual testimonials to the mighty Healer of my soul are demanded, is because each successive year demonstrates more and more clearly the completeness and permanency of the cure. Time magnifies the keeping power of Christ. Testimony on this point must be constant, lest silence be misinterpreted. If another apology for repeated

Digitized by Google

testimony by the same witness is needed, let it be found in the sad fact that such testimonies to the perfect saving power of our Emmanuel are relatively few. The vast mass of Christian professors, in the words of Bishop Thompson, "Like the rivers emptying into the Arctic Sea, are frozen over at the mouth."

> "Jesus is God! If on the earth
> This blessed faith decays,
> More tender must our love become,
> More plentiful our praise."

Finally, to all my friends disposed to criticise the publication to the heartless world of the sacred secrets of the heart's intercourse with Jesus, the celestial Bridegroom, let me say that I find the most exquisite delight in exalting the King of glory, and warbling in the ear of the universe my Magnificat with the Virgin Mother of my Lord. Luke i. 46–55. While some seek for joy in quest of gold, or fame, or lore, let me crave the boon I most desire on earth, the privilege of proclaiming, trumpet-tongued, Jesus, mighty to save. For the benefit of all who are living, where so many years of my own Christian experience were spent,

Digitized by Google

in a dry and thirsty land, let me say that there is a "place of broad rivers and streams," where

"Grace not in rills, but in cataracts rolls."

From this goodly land I have no desire to return to the Sahara from which I have happily escaped, yet I will send to "my partners in the wilderness" frequent reports of my explorations of this new continent. Everything here is on a magnificent scale.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea."

There is a constant sense of the immensity of God's love, an ocean poured down upon the earth in the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ, and in the boundless provisions of grace culminating in the gift of the abiding Comforter and Sanctifier. Blessed Jesus!

"There's not a craving in the mind
Thou dost not meet and still;
There's not a wish the heart can have,
Which Thou dost not fulfil."

This view of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus awakens the liveliest commiseration of

Digitized by Google

the thirsty multitudes of worldlings, and the scarcely less pitiable host of nominal Christians vainly digging in the sand for a few drops of brackish water, when whole Lake Superiors of sweet, cool, and lively waters are flashing in the sun all around as far as the eye can reach.

> "Would that they knew what Jesus is,
> And what untold abyss
> Lies in love's simple forwardness,
> Of more than earthly bliss!"

Thus the soul has its joyful and its sorrowful side; the side turned toward Jesus is a hemisphere of light and warmth; the side which looks out toward the countless procession of the unsaved, tramping ceaselessly down to death, is a hemisphere of shade. "Sorrowful yet always rejoicing."

I wish to testify most emphatically that the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart by the abiding Comforter, has wonderfully refined and intensified all lawful pleasures. Jesus drops a great lump of sugar into every cup of earthly bliss. This unexpected heightening of innocent enjoyments was hidden from me for many years in the unappropriated promise that

Digitized by Google

Christ would "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." For six years there has been not only a new heaven above, but a new earth beneath, strewn with flowers and filled with springs bubbling with the purest joys.

The society here is very select. Faith, Hope, Peace, Quietude, Resignation, Victory, and Assurance here make their constant homes, while Joy, Gladness, Rejoicing, and Exultation have their summer residences here, and the summer lasts nearly all the year. The Italian atmosphere of this region is too transparent for Doubt to live in. Guilt, and Fear, and Worry, and Discontent have never migrated to this cheerful clime. Temptation makes an occasional incursion, but he acts as if he feels that he is an outlaw.

There are old residents of this country who are by no means favorites with me, and I cut their acquaintance as much as possible, such as Ignorance, Forgetfulness, Misjudgment, Error, Inadvertence, Failure and a large family by the name of Infirmity. In fact I have repeatedly cast my vote for their exclusion, but they insist that they have a right to remain since no

Digitized by Google

statute lies against them. They say that they are grossly wronged when confounded with an odious foreigner called Sin, who slightly resembles them in external appearance, but is wholly different in moral character. I must confess that a close observation extended through several years demonstrates the justice of this plea. Hence I live in peace with these old citizens, but do not delight in their society.

But I hear some one inquire, "Have you perfect satisfaction? Is every craving of your soul filled?" Yes. No. My present capacity for the love of God is filled, but so precious is the treasure that I am coveting a vessel a thousand times larger. Hence with C. Wesley I daily exclaim:

> "Insatiate to this spring I fly,
> I drink, and yet am ever dry;
> Ah! who against thy charms is proof?
> Ah! who that loves can love enough?"

Hence the paradoxical condition of satiety and hunger.

This must ever be the experience of a being capable of progress. In this respect I count myself as well off in my heaven below, as I

Digitized by Google

shall be in my heaven above. Dr. Doddridge had a clear insight into this subject when he wrote thus to a friend—"To allow yourself deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperfect attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it."

Almost daily Fletcher's prayer is on my lips, "Lord, enlarge the vessel."

> "With gentle swiftness lead me on,
> Dear Christ, to see Thy face;
> And meanwhile in my narrow heart,
> Oh! make Thyself more space!"

With what wonderful delight do I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. The stairs that lead to my pulpit are more inviting to my feet than the ivory steps of earth's mightiest throne.

I am in full sympathy with Payson's declaration that he had rather a man would eat his dinner for him than preach his sermon for him.

Digitized by Google

Especially am I drawn toward the members of the Church, multitudes of whom need some one to travail in birth again for them until Christ be formed within them. Nominal Christians are the greatest obstacle to the advance of the kingdom of heaven. I long to show unto them the beauty of Christ in such a light that they will be drawn into entire devotion to Him. Doubting souls awaken the deepest sympathy in me, having myself long suffered from this cause until Jesus wrought a complete cure. To such I have a special mission.

"I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is ever gay."

I have made the great discovery, that all the foundations laid in the Bible are for faith. In that whole blessed volume there is not so much as one peg to hang a legitimate doubt upon. Legitimate, did I say? There is no such thing possible in the case of an honest man who owns a New Testament. By an honest man I mean one who is willing to follow wherever the truth leads. Doubt has its root in an unwilling heart.

Digitized by Google

"But what is your experience," says one, "respecting the possibility of living year after year without condemnation for sin?" To glorify Jesus, I must say that my soul a witness is that the petition in the *Te Deum Laudamus*, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin," is a prayer for a blessing attainable for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, and in leap year three hundred and sixty-six. Why should it be deemed impossible for God to keep the fully trusting soul?

Is it strange that a soul all aglow with love to the Lawgiver should feel no inclination to violate the law? Perfect love is an infallible cure of sinning. Hence it is a synonym for entire sanctification. "But do you not have many evil thoughts come into your head?" A thousand *thoughts of evil* come in and go out again. "In all this Job sinned not."

The mental conception of an evil act is not sinful. Sin is conceived in the voluntary nature. Rev. Joseph Cook, in one of his recent Monday lectures, in Tremont Temple, asserted that sin is known by intuition, that all intuitive ideas are *self-evident, necessary and universal*, and that the voluntary element in sin as an

Digitized by Google

act has these three characteristics. To this statement I most heartily subscribe. The will, the capital power of the soul, may be so energized and sanctified as to stand as a flint against sin. In this sublime attitude stood that strongest human will, the will of the Man of Nazareth. Thus victorious may all his followers stand, "kept by the power of God through faith." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

PRAISE God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Digitized by Google